TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
IN
BRITISH GUIANA

HENRY KIRKE

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

IN

BRITISH GUIANA

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Very truly yours

Henry Clarke

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

IN

BRITISH GUIANA

BY

HENRY KIRKE, M.A., B.C.L., Oxon.

FORMERLY SHERIFF OF DEMERARA

AUTHOR OF "THE FIRST ENGLISH CONQUEST OF CANADA," ETC., ETC.

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON

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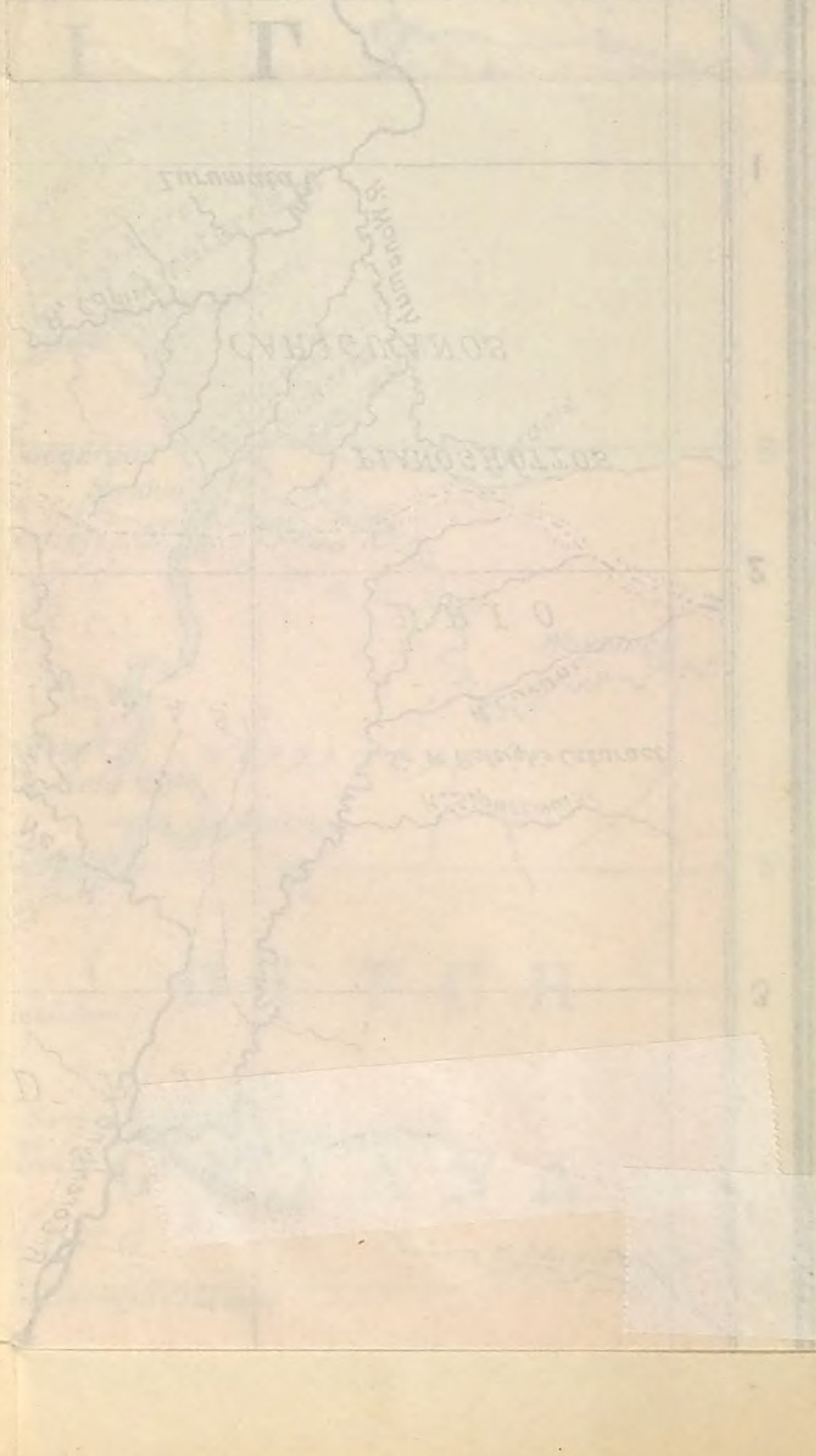
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SPECIAL MAP OF BRITISH GUIANA

illustrating the

VENEZUELA-GUIANA BOUNDARY DISPUTE

Scale of Miles

20 10 0 20 40 60

REFERENCE

- British Territory.
- Territory claimed by Britain and Venezuela.
- Venezuelan Territory.
- Extreme limit of British Claim.
- ,, ,, Venezuelan Claim.
- Original Schomburgk Line.
- Extension of the Schomburgk Line.
- Gold Mining Districts.
- Railways open.
- Railways under Construction.
- Rapids, Cataracts and Falls.

VENEZUELA

GUIANA

BRAZIL

DUTCH GUIANA

CLAIMED BY BRAZIL

Delta of Orinoco R.

MOUTHS OF THE ORINOCO R.

Araguao I.

I. de Loran

Nuima

Cangrejo

Barima Sand

British frontier sta.

Pta Mocomoco

Venezuelan Frontier Sta.

WARRAU

R. Barima

Mora Passage

R. Amakura

R. Waima Guaima

Pta Cocales

ARAWAK

GUARAUNOS

Morawhanna

Barimanna

C. Nassau

Bird I.

Better Success

Anna Regina

L. Tapacuma

Warimbo

Warina

Morebo

Simuira

Koriabo

Barima Mine

Mekorarassa Falls

Anaparie

Macaseema

Cadui

Imoti

Samboura

Suddies

L. Ikarakka

Wakenaam

ESSEQUIBO

Georgetown

Parika

Mahaica

R. Mahaicony

R. Abary

Port Wellington

R. Berbice

Fort Andrew

New Amsterdam

Albion

Port Mourant

R. Corentyne

Wickerie

Gloucester

Caronie

Hopetown

Bartika Grove

Berlin

Dalgin

Christianburg

Hoya

Rapids

Penal Settlement

Suwaraima

Maiapi

Wahanatta

Cartunie

Waika

Acarabisi

Haiowa

Cadira (Ruins Ancient Fort

Venezuelan Post

Nuruan British Post

Piamah Falls

Barnard Synd.

Cura

Cura-Cura

Paragua

Toucoro

Mamo

Soledad

Bolivar (Angostura)

Barrancas

Tabasca

Uracoa

Las Tablas

Tortola

Piacoa

Guayanavieja

Sacupana

Imataca

Sta Catalina

Sta Meri

Caroni

Carichi

Sierra Piacoa

Upata

Palmar

Sta Maria

Cumamo

Curi

Sierra de Imataca

Guacipati

el Callao

CARATAL

Nueva Providencia

(Mines of Yuruari

Puedpa

Pastora

Aima

Sta Clara

Choco

Avechica

S. Serafine

S. Pedro

C. Arimagua

C. la Parida

Sierra Usupamo

Sierra de Ricoco

YURUARI

Mahayparu

Camacusa

Sowarti

Merumé Mts

Ackar

Cassowa

Arencuna

Koimara Mts

Roraima Mt.

8560

Our

Barapang

Corakitta

Tamarchelliet

Caracara

Makarapan Mts

Mora

Hawawa

Karinambo

Pirara

Warami

Yarewah

Berkuton

Pukasanto

Kanaku Mts

Cuano Mts

Coratamung Mts

S. Bento

Ft. S. Joaquin

Boa Vista

Cunha

Cachoeirinha

Waterticow

Waraip

Chuna

Fiuza

Campo de Vista Alegre

Forest

Mood Mts

SIRICUMES

Gerenaldo

Maopity

Ajupa

Manuni

Tepi

Zurumata

CARIGUANOS

PIANOGHOTTOS

Wayombo

Apuru

Tomatai

Temehri Rock

Falls

Sir J. Barrow's Cataract

Great Cataracts

Lord Stanley's Cataract

Goodall's Cat.

Pt Rightabout

Red Cliff

Sir W. Raleigh's Cataract

New R.

Daagerdaad

Skeldon

Waterloo

Old Vigilante

Georgtroy

De Hoop

Layfield

Cumaro

Seba

Mora

Appaparo Mine

Pateman

Puaba

Orarumalali Trail

Great Falls

Potaro

Ichowra

Waraputa

Koieteur Falls

Taiepong

Twasinka Mts

Arinda

Tambicabo

Maccari Mts

Owenteik

Zurama

Apotari

Cumaka

Rewa

Essequibo

Omai

Rupununi

Kaieteur

Potaro

Siparuni

Puro Biro

Yuruan

Cuyuni

Mazaruni

Caroni

Paragua

Usupamo

Carapo

Capure

Urimar

Apanguan

Cako

Curuya

Caramang

Cadahung

Aguirre

Imataca

Barima

Amakura

Aruka

Waini

Pomeroon

Supinaam

Mahaica

Demerara

Berbice

Corentyne

Nickerie

Coppename

Marowijne

Lawa

Tapanahoni

Sipaliwini

Kutari

Tacutu

Uraricoera

Uraricapara

Uravae

Caricuri

Majary

Idume

Mareppa

Caja caja

Maraca I.

Sapara

Sa do Murupu

Sa Pacaraima

Sa Payuamu

Ruins of Griot

Ricabaro

Parcupi

Arapepe

Manu

Cotinga

Muri

Pao

Merevari

Vallina

Tacutu

Rio Branco

Cuit Wau

Inajatuba

Anaua

Mapwerre

Taruene

to Amazon

Jaore

Aiarany

Waini

Barima

Arima

Choco

Ruins of Griot

MAKUSI

MACUCHIS

WAPISIANAS

ATORAIS

TARUMAS

DARIO

KARIBENG

Savanneh

Grassland

Mountains

Rivers

Trail

Rapids

Falls

Mine

Fort

Ruins

Sa

Mts

Inset map: Dominion of Canada, Hudson Bay, United States, Mexico, Brazil, PACIFIC OCEAN, ATLANTIC OCEAN, British Empire coloured red. Railways. Telegraphs. Tracks of Sailing Vessels. Tracks of Mail Steamers.

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Issued with "TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IN BRITISH GUIANA," by Henry Kirke, M.A.

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

IN

BRITISH GUIANA

CHAPTER I.

Introduction—Changes in twenty-five years—First impressions of British Guiana—Mosquitoes—Frogs—Georgetown—Houses in Guiana—Drainage—Heat and damp—Society—Absence of the leisured and literary classes—Newspaper press—Anthony Trollope—Boddam-Whetham—Monotony of life—British Guiana—Its position unknown—Travellers' tales—Climate—Early burials—Yellow fever—Funerals—Difficulty of burial—Leprosy—Hospitals.

In one of her interesting books, Mrs. Oliphant refuses to include under the head of "literature" Reminiscences and Recollections, as she says that they are only written to gratify the vanity of garrulous old men, and are of no value from a literary point of view. This may be true, but at the same time it cannot be denied that even the worst written and most stupid book of reminiscences may contain some valuable facts, and anecdotes may therein be treasured up which may prove of great value to the future historian or sociologist.

How much do we not owe to the many diaries and reminiscences written by Englishmen and Frenchmen during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? So, despite Mrs. Oliphant's strictures, and disregarding the fact that some "indolent reviewers," if they condescend to notice this book, may put me down as a garrulous and vain old man, I shall proceed to write down my "Recollections of British Guiana" as it was during my connection with the colony from 1872 to 1897, in the hope that my readers, gentle or otherwise, may find something therein both to amuse and instruct them.

Colonies change so rapidly, both as to men, manners, and customs, that the colony of British Guiana when I left it was totally different from the colony as I found it. The land itself had changed; old landmarks had disappeared, and new ones sprung up; flourishing islands are in existence where not long ago the tide ebbed and flowed; railways and steam vessels are now hurrying through vast territories only known twenty years ago to the fierce Carib or placid Arawak; gold diggers and diamond searchers are swarming up every great river and gloomy creek, and the whole face of the country is being rapidly changed. And with this change of circumstances the people have changed. The old quaint manners and habits have disappeared; the old legends are vanishing; the people dress and talk as others; the electric light illuminates their houses; the tramcar patrols their streets; the silk chimney-



GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, GEORGETOWN, MAY 4TH, 1874.

[*To face p.* 2.

pot of civilization is constantly in evidence; and they are as other men. The world is gradually acquiring a painful similarity; in a few hundred years every one will dress alike and speak the same language, and the human race will be reduced to one dull commonplace level of uniformity.

After the lapse of so many years, it is difficult to remember what made the most impression upon a stranger landing in British Guiana at Georgetown. I believe what struck me most were the mosquitoes and the frogs. To new-comers the mosquitoes are more than a nuisance, they cause actual pain and inconvenience: I have known people unable to put on their boots for weeks owing to the inflammation caused by these pests. In such a damp climate, and where the country is intersected in all directions by canals and trenches, frogs enjoy a sort of paradise. There are a great variety of batrachians, from the tiny little piping frogs that hide themselves in goblets and water bottles, to the huge bull frog that bellows in the marshes. The noise caused by these animals in Georgetown at certain times of the year is deafening to a new-comer, but it is curious that after a time you become so accustomed to it that it passes without notice, unless your attention is specially called to it, or it is unusually vociferous.

Georgetown, the capital of British Guiana, the Venice of the West Indies, as it has been called, is certainly a strange place, and one calculated to excite the interest and admiration of every one.

Beneath the level of the sea at springtides, the city is defended from the waves of the Atlantic by a granite breakwater two miles long, stretching from Fort William Frederick at the mouth of the river Demerara to Plantation Kitty on the East coast: great granite groins run out from it into the sea every sixty yards or so, to break the force of the waves; whilst the wall, which is twenty-five feet wide on the top, is utilized as a promenade and health resort in the afternoons and evenings. This sea wall was commenced in 1858, and was not completed until 1892. It was built principally by convict labour, and all the granite was brought from the penal settlement on the Massaruni River. The streets in Georgetown are all rectangular; the city is intersected in all directions by open canals and drains, which are crossed by innumerable bridges. These, at the time I first went out to the colony, were made of wood, which have since been replaced by handsome structures built of iron and cement. Main Street is certainly one of the prettiest streets I ever saw. About forty yards wide, it is divided up the middle by a wide canal full of the Victoria Regia lily, the canal, and the roads on each side, being shaded by an avenue of samān trees. Handsome houses, painted white, or some bright colour, are built on each side of the street, nearly all of which are surrounded by gardens, full of crotons, palms, poinsettias, bourgainvilleas, and all sorts of bright-hued plants and flowers; on some of the trees can be seen clusters of cattleyas with their mauve and rose-

coloured flowers; from another an oncidium throws out its racemes of odorous petals, four to five feet in length. The Brick dam, as it is called, is another beautiful boulevard more than a mile in length, bordered on both sides by lovely flowering trees and lofty palms.

Houses in Guiana are almost entirely made of wood, raised upon brick pillars from eight to ten feet high, to enjoy the breeze, and avoid damp and malaria. The colony provides excellent hardwood timber which will last for ages, but for cheapness builders, whilst using colony timber for the framework of the houses, use American lumber for the walls and partitions. This soon rots, the ants and the damp climate destroy it rapidly, and the outside of a house, despite frequent paintings, will require renewal every ten years. The system of drainage is primitive. The rain water is drained off by the canals, which are connected with the Demerara River by sluices, the doors of which can only be opened for twelve hours in the day, when the tide is falling or only just beginning to rise. The house drainage is poured into cesspools, which are unlined, so that it soaks into the ground. These pits are rarely emptied, and when this is done, another pit is dug in the compound, and the filth from one poured into the other. In this way the whole city is becoming a mass of cesspools, which it will be dangerous to disturb. No wonder that the late Surgeon-General (Dr. Grieve) spoke out plainly about this suicidal policy, but nothing has been

done to remedy the evil. Since writing the above, the Town Council of Georgetown have bestirred themselves; odourless excavators have been purchased, which clean out the cesspools, but the filthy habit still prevails of emptying their contents into the river, causing frightful stenches and malodourous deposits. But let us leave this very unsavoury reminiscence.

The principal recollections that one has of British Guiana are of its heat and dampness. It is one of the hottest places in the world, that is, as regards mean temperature all the year round, night and day. The temperature is never excessive, as in some parts of India and Africa in the summer, but there is no compensation in the shape of a cool season such as those places enjoy in the winter. Without change, the shade temperature remains the same for weeks and months, varying from 82° to 88°; sometimes, when there has been a very heavy fall of rain and no sun for two days, the mercury will register 78°, when we all shiver and shake, put on mackintoshes, and long for the sun and warmth. Again, at the end of the dry season, when the thunder clouds are piling up in the south, the mercury sportively leaps up to 90°, and remains there for a day or two, until thunder and rain bring it down a little. I once saw a thermometer which registered 55°, but some wag had put it into the ice chest, and flourished it about in support of his assertion that it was a cold night. As to rain, I cannot say that it always rains, but I will say that there are very few days in the year

when it never rains in some part of the country. The rainfall of the colony on the coast varies from 90 to 140 inches, so it cannot be called a dry country, although droughts lasting for several months occasionally occur. One thing is satisfactory—when it does rain there is no doubt about it, the water comes down with a rush and a pelt which leaves no doubt or anxiety in the mind as to whether it is raining or not. It always amused me when I returned to England to hear people arguing whether it rained or not, and flattening their noses against the window-pane to see, or putting out their hands to feel for, the drops of rain. Sometimes the rainfall was somewhat phenomenal. I remember sixteen inches falling in one night, and more than two inches one morning during the half-hour in which we were taking our breakfast.

I may say at once that I have no intention of putting anything into this book which could hurt any person's feelings, so I shall abstain from writing any scandals about the friends or associates amongst whom I spent so many happy years of my life. The white population of British Guiana differs little from a similar class in England. Society is composed of the usual elements, officials, professional men, merchants and planters with their wives and families, who are as well bred and well educated as people of the same avocations in other countries. If there be any distinction to be made, I think I should give it in favour of the colonists. Certainly in no other place have I

seen such sympathy, hospitality, and generosity as I have seen displayed in British Guiana. Of course during a long sojourn in the colony, I have known some strange characters, and had some strange experiences, but I should be sorry to rake up old stories which would be of no benefit to my readers, and might give pain to many innocent persons; so if any old colonist opens these pages in the hope of reviving the memories of bygone scandals and iniquities, I fear that he will be disappointed. It is impossible to avoid some unpleasant details if I am to give a truthful impression of the colony, but I have introduced as few as possible; and the individuals who were responsible for them will only be recognized by those who were well aware of the facts before I narrated them. It is true that in most colonies there are a few black sheep, who have been shipped thither by despairing friends and relations, after having failed to find them any satisfactory position in England; but the majority of the ruling caste are energetic men who, failing to find an opening for their talents in their native land, have pushed towards that Greater Britain beyond the seas, where there is still elbow-room for all who want to work.

The only material difference between society in British Guiana and Great Britain, is in the absence of the leisured and literary classes. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find an idle man in the colony. Those who have amassed enough money to enable them to live at ease, take their

flight to healthier climes; and when any worker feels the necessity for rest, he seeks it in a sea voyage and change of scene. The absence of all artistic and literary society might by some be deemed a drawback.

During my stay in the colony, it was my good fortune to meet many highly educated men, classical and mathematical scholars, men of great erudition, botanists, zoologists, and the learned in other lines—not a few were well known in the world of letters—but still they were in a very small minority, and, unlike leaven, they had no influence upon the general lump. When we turn to art, it must be confessed that we were singularly wanting. A few there were who tried to arouse some feeling for the true and the beautiful in art and nature, but the seed fell on barren ground and produced no fruit. But young and vigorous communities are too much occupied in providing for the necessities of life to have time for art studies, which must be sought amongst old and somewhat decaying civilizations. In one respect the colony was singularly fortunate, in the possession of an independent and well-conducted press. The newspapers published in the colony, although few in number, were excellent in material, and will compare favourably with the journals of much larger and more influential communities. I would especially mention *The Argosy*, a weekly newspaper, owned, edited, and published by my friend Mr. James Thomson, which is by far the highest class newspaper published in the West

Indies, and which owes its inception and prosperity to the individual exertions of its owner. I have had occasion, in writing these Reminiscences, to refer frequently to the old files of *The Argosy*, from which I have refreshed my memory as to several occurrences, and to which I am indebted for some amusing anecdotes illustrating my remarks on men and things.

This is not a guide book, and Georgetown is now so well known, that any one curious on the subject can find a description of the place in various books of travel. Perhaps the best and most humorous account of the colony and its capital is to be found in Anthony Trollope's "West Indies and Spanish Main." Boddam-Whetham, in his Roraima book, gives an accurate and well-painted sketch of the city. But I think no one has yet given a true word-painting which can convey to the reader any idea of the excessive brightness of the place, caused by the width of the streets, the red roads, numerous fine white buildings and churches, the wealth of foliage and flower everywhere conspicuous,—all lit up with an intense equatorial sunshine.

The city is embowered in trees: its aspect from the top of the lighthouse is of a sea of palms, out of which rise at intervals towers, spires, and campanile. For a great part of the year, the flamboyant trees make your eyes ache with the gorgeousness of their scarlet flowers, whilst in September and October the long-johns break the sky line with their rich cream-coloured plumes,

changing week by week to a real burnt sienna. The brilliancy of the flowers is rivalled by the gay scarlets, yellows, and greens, which clothe the limbs of the delicate Hindoos and stalwart negresses perambulating the streets. One of the greatest drawbacks to the colony as a residence, is the monotony of existence within its borders. There is no winter, nor autumn, nor spring—it is one perpetual summer. One day is like another, except that some days it rains and on others it does not, and for a few months the weather is hotter and more unpleasant than usual. There is never a cold breeze, no gales, no hurricanes; the earthquakes are insignificant; the thunder-storms on the coast infrequent and inoffensive.

The food is always the same; the same tough, insipid meat and sodden vegetables; lean fowls and tasteless fish; oranges, pine-apples, and bananas, all the year round; mangoes for six months; sapodillas and star-apples are almost always with us. It is this sameness of food which makes us so greedy when we go home. How you revel in the variety of fish, flesh, and fowl, the tender spring vegetables, the luscious strawberries, the fruit tart with cream! oh heavens! how delicious they were! It were worth several years of exile to experience the joy of quaffing a draught of English beer, and the sitting down to the fried sole and delicious bread and butter of an English breakfast.

The three colonies of Essequibo, Berbice, and Demerara were amalgamated into one Government,

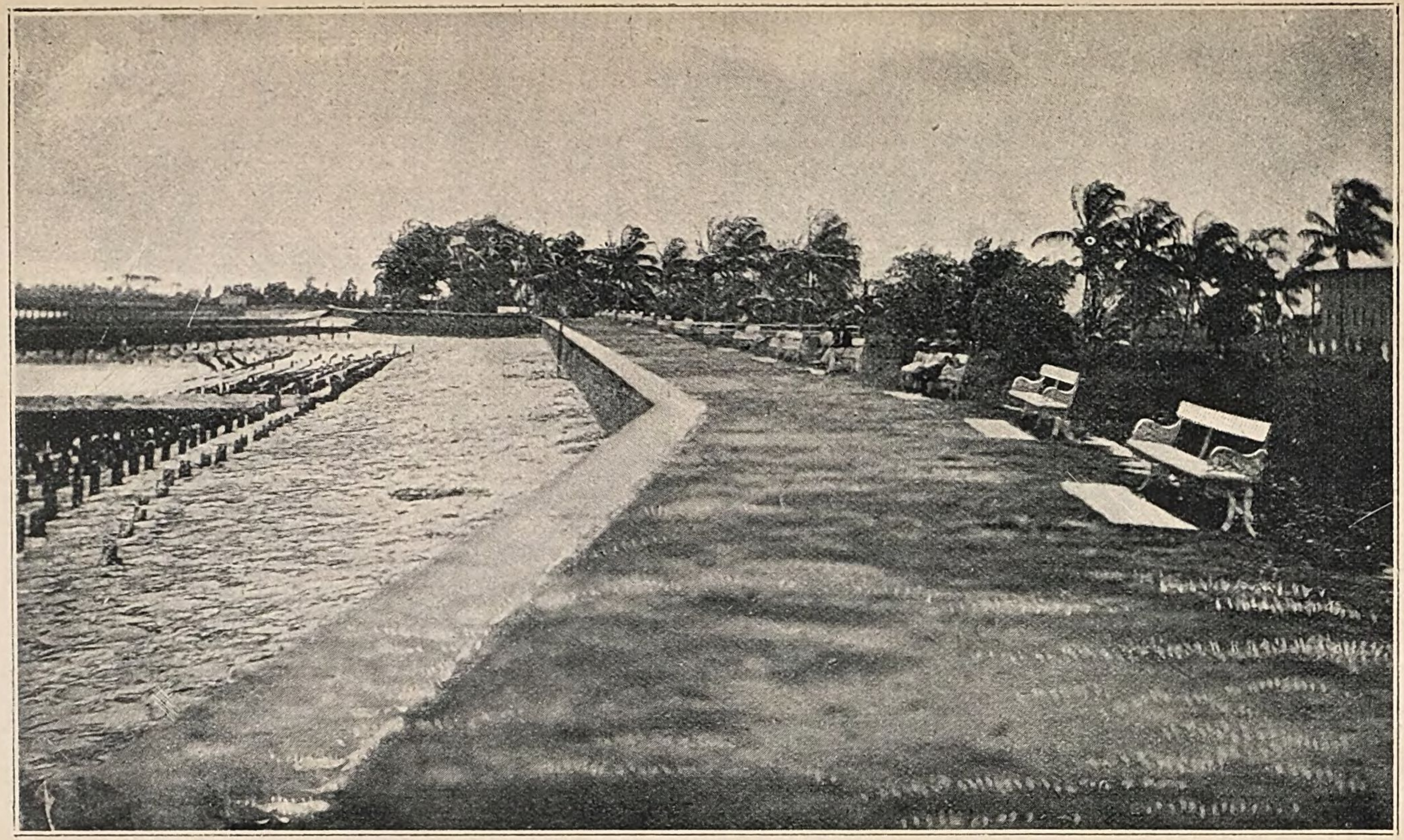
under the name of British Guiana, in 1831, and Major-General Sir Benjamin Durban was appointed, by that excellent monarch King William IV., to be the first Governor and Commander-in-chief in and over the colony of British Guiana, Vice-Admiral and Ordinary of the same. These territories, which had been conquered from the Dutch, returned to them at the Peace of Amiens, reconquered and retained in the subsequent wars, lie in the equatorial belt of South America, and form part of the great territory of Guyana. The other divisions of this region belong to the Venezuelans, the Dutch, and the French, and are called respectively Guyana, Surinam, and Cayenne. Surinam once belonged to us, but we exchanged it with the Dutch for the flourishing settlement of New York. By this bargain we thought we had done Mynheer in the eye, but it turned out otherwise, as the Dutch still possess Surinam, whilst we have lost New York. It is a curious fact that when the Spaniards first discovered Guyana they named two rivers falling into the Atlantic Dessequibo and Di Mirari; one of these rivers has lost the D, and the other has retained it, so they have become Essequibo and Demerary. I give these geographical facts, because the position of British Guiana on the map of the world is generally unknown in English society. During my several furloughs, when I have visited my native land, I have been congratulated by my acquaintances on looking so well, despite the climate of Africa, which they

understood was so insalubrious: and when I told one friend, a vicar of the Anglican Church, that I had been some time in Demerara, he astonished me by saying that he had always been informed that Demerara was the richest island in the Caribbean Sea. It was no use asserting that Guiana was not in Africa, and that Demerara was not an island, so I gave it up, and accepted meekly my insular and African position. But why should we scoff at these good people for their ignorance, when an Under-Secretary of State in the House of Commons gravely asserted that Demerara was an island, and none of his hearers in that august assembly could venture offhand to contradict him. Since writing the above, the dispute with Venezuela and the United States over the boundary question, and the establishment of gold mines in the north-west district, have made the colony better known in Europe.

It is difficult for us poor travellers to do or say what is right; stay-at-home people always know so much more about the countries we have visited than we do. I remember once indulging in some yarns which were swallowed greedily by my audience, until I asserted that in Berbice I had seen muscovy ducks, which weighed from six to eight pounds each, and which roosted and built their nests in trees, which statement was received with howls of incredulity and derision; whereas it is quite true, and more credible than several travellers' stories with which I had regaled them. It was the old story over again of the flying fish

and Pharaoh's chariot wheels. Give a dog a bad name and you may as well hang him. Certainly this is true of British Guiana. When one mentions Demerara in England, we are gravely informed that it is impossible for a white man to live there for a year; and when I assert that I have lived there off and on for twenty-five years, I am regarded as an accomplished liar. This bad name was acquired in the earlier part of the century, when white troops were sent to the colony from Halifax and other cold stations, when they died in great numbers from yellow fever and strong rum. The sanitary arrangements of the barracks were defective, in fact, were conspicuous by their absence, the men were grossly overcrowded, and the natural results followed.

There have also been many cases where young men coming from England, who neglect the most ordinary precautions for the preservation of health in a tropical country, have died after a few weeks' residence, and the news of this, when carried home, has confirmed the prejudice against the colony. An English barrister, who had been appointed as a stipendiary magistrate in the colony, was introduced to me, and he asked me whether the climate was as fatal as he had been told in England. I said, "No; your life is quite safe if you avoid three or four things. The heat and moisture of the climate produce profuse perspirations, so be careful never to sit down and go to sleep in your damp clothes; don't expose yourself to the sun, and for some time be



SEA WALL, GEORGETOWN (*p.* 4). [*To face p.* 14.

careful not to exhaust yourself by over-exertion." What was the result? A fortnight afterwards he rode a mule round an estate in the hot sun, then played several sets of lawn tennis; drove home in his wet clothes; on arrival, feeling exhausted, he threw himself into a hammock in the open gallery, with a cool sea-breeze blowing upon him; fell asleep; awoke up at midnight in a roasting fever; was dead in forty-eight hours, and buried in ten more. This was not an isolated case; I have known the same thing happen over and over again. What man in England, who is in his senses, would go to sleep in his wet clothes after hunting or shooting? Yet people in Demerara do what they would never dream of doing in England, and then, when they get ill, they abuse the climate.

There is one dreadful consequence of the climate which strikes every one, *i.e.* the necessity for almost immediate burial after death. No corpse can be retained in a house more than twenty hours, and, when the cause of death has been yellow fever, almost immediate burial is necessary. I have known cases where dissolution absolutely began before death, when the extremities were black before the breath was out of the body. In many cases it has been found necessary to wrap the body immediately after death in a cotton sheet soaked in carbolic acid, prepared beforehand, and thrust it into a coffin, and screw it down at once. When Mr. G. died suddenly one Sunday afternoon, under somewhat

suspicious circumstances, although I held an inquest a few hours after death, his body was actually melting away from his bones. The doctor I had summoned refused to make a post-mortem examination, as the body was too much decayed; the jury held their nostrils as they viewed the body, and we had to adjourn to another house to finish the investigation.

It adds another terror to death when you stand by the grave hearing the solemn Burial Service of the Church read over the remains of one with whom you had been drinking and laughing forty-eight hours before. Still it is wonderful how callous one becomes. I can remember how, in 1882, I slept at the hotel, having a dead man in the room on one side of me, and a dying one on the other. Tropical hotels are not like English ones—everything is open for coolness, so that almost every sound can be heard from one room to another. The dead man, poor fellow, was quiet enough, but poor Blair's groans disturbed me sometimes in the night, and I went into his room two or three times to see if I could be of any use to him; but nothing availed, and he was dead before breakfast in the morning. One curious thing about yellow fever is that there is often a sort of rally after the beginning of the attack, when the patient feels quite strong, and insists upon getting up and going out. I remember one young man who had the fever was reported to be very ill. I went to inquire about him, and, to my astonishment, I was told that he had gone out. Feeling

better, he had got out of bed, dressed, and started off to walk to the sea-wall and back, a distance of about two miles. He returned in a state of exhaustion, and was dead twenty-four hours afterwards. Young Miles got out of his bed and wrote a letter to his mother, telling her that she would be sorry to hear that he was going to die—which he did, poor boy, a few hours afterwards.

I was Sheriff of Essequibo at the beginning of the epidemic of 1881, and many young men and maidens were sent down thither to be out of Georgetown, where the fever was most prevalent. So we were very lively on the coast, and had some pleasant picnics and dances. I recall vividly one picnic on the sandhills behind Johanna Cecilia. Young Tengely was one of us—a bright young fellow, who was amusing us with songs, accompanying himself on the banjo. As we were exchanging farewells after the picnic, Tengely said to me, "I must say good-bye to you, Sheriff, as I am off to town to-morrow." I urged him not to go, as the fever was still serious in town; but he said he must go, there was no danger, he was not afraid. Within a week he was dead and buried.

Some people who went up to Georgetown brought the fever down with them to the coast. I remember a poor young Scotchman, an overseer at Plantation Reliance, who was down with yellow fever. I went over to see him with the manager of the estate and the district medical officer. The doctor was at his wits' end; the fever was so high

that the patient's skin seemed absolutely to burn your fingers as you touched him. We soaked sheets in water and sprinkled them with lime-juice, and rolled him up in them; but they were dry and hard almost as soon as put on, the heat of his body was so great. All our efforts were unavailing, and he died in a few hours.

Many of the victims of yellow fever turn quite dark after death, others a bright orange. I never shall forget my horror when I called to inquire after the health of a bright, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired child, of about eleven years of age, who was down with fever. Her father came to the door, and, as I asked after the child, he said, "Come here." I followed him upstairs into his daughter's room, and there was the poor child lying dead, her hair cut off, her limbs and face black and discoloured. She had died only an hour before.

But don't let any of my readers go away with the impression, because such horrors as I have described occasionally take place, that British Guiana is a white man's grave. Far from it. It is true that epidemics of yellow fever occur at long intervals, and that there are always a few sporadic cases in the colony; nor can it be denied that malarial fever prevails to a very serious extent, which, after several attacks, may prove fatal. But, on the other hand, the fatal fevers of Europe—typhoid, typhus, and scarlet—are almost unknown. I have never known a case of small-pox or diphtheria during my residence there.

The prevailing causes of death are heart disease in every form, phthisis and pneumonia, diseases of the liver and kidneys, and of course fevers, malarial and bilious. During twenty-five years' service in the colony I have only once been seriously ill, and have always at other times enjoyed excellent health.

In the old days, when white men were few and generally without kith or kin in the country, a funeral was always attended by all the white population, who saw their brother colonist decently and honourably buried. When the necessity for this attendance had ceased, the custom still continued, and now, when any one well known in society dies, a notice is sent round and all the world goes to the funeral. I have counted a hundred private carriages in a funeral cortége. Funerals take place at 8 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. If you die before 4 p.m. on Wednesday, your funeral will be at 8 a.m. on Thursday. If you expire after 4 p.m. on Thursday, your funeral will be at 4.30 p.m. the next day, unless, as very often happens, a medical man, for sanitary reasons, considers that the funeral should take place earlier.

It used to be the custom to send round funeral notices to all the acquaintances of the deceased. These printed circulars, edged with black, were headed "Memento Mori," and were derived from the Dutch, who called them "Doed Briefen."

Owing to the low-lying land, burials are sometimes attended with difficulty. When graves are dug they frequently become full of water, and

I have known cases where funerals were delayed owing to the necessity of bailing out the water. In the cemetery of Le Repentir, which is the principal burying-place for Georgetown, most of the coffins are placed in a shallow hole, barely a foot deep, and are then built over with bricks and mortar, and covered with cemented concrete. The heat and rain frequently crack this covering in a short time, and I have seen coffins exposed to view of persons who have only been buried a few months before.

Cremation is much needed in the colony; in fact, there is no place where, for sanitary reasons, it ought to be more enforced. The present system of burial is most detrimental to health in all countries, but in Demerara it is absolutely suicidal. It is, however, a remarkable fact that all vestiges of the dead are wanting in a few years. In the old Bourda cemetery are many family vaults in which no one is now allowed to be buried without special permission from the Town Council. I have known two instances where such burials took place when I was present. When the vaults were opened, in one case the inside was absolutely empty, although a person had been buried there within the memory of many persons then present; in the other, which had held two coffins, two or three well-polished bones were in one corner and nothing else. Damp, ants, rats, and land crabs must be accountable for the disappearance of body, coffin, and everything, not even the metal fittings of the coffins being found.

Another dreadful and disgusting feature in West Indian life is in the number of lepers which exist. Despite the dictum of the College of Physicians, we, who have lived with lepers in our midst, are fully satisfied that leprosy is contagious under certain circumstances; so efforts are made in a perfunctory way by the Government to isolate the lepers from the rest of the community. But the laws on the subject are very insufficiently carried out; numbers of lepers are seen abroad in the streets; and, although there are leper asylums for men and women, they are not prevented from strolling into the neighbouring roads and villages. Nothing can exceed the horror caused by a visit to these asylums: I used to feel sick for days afterwards. In old days, the lepers were isolated and kept on an island in the Massaruni River called Kaow Island, below the penal settlement, where they were attended by the surgeon of that institution. Divine service was held every Sunday on the island in a small church provided for the purpose, the chaplain of the settlement being the officiating priest. For some reason or another it was decided to move the lepers to the main land, and a party of police were sent up to see to their deportation and to destroy their settlement, to prevent people from squatting there and so becoming infected with leprosy. I accompanied the Inspector of police who commanded the detachment, and felt as if I were committing sacrilege when I helped to set fire to the building, where for so many years

the services and the sacraments of the Church had been held and administered.

Perhaps there is no country in the world which, for its size and population, has so many hospitals as British Guiana. Besides large public hospitals in each of the three counties of Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice, there is a hospital on every sugar estate (about a hundred in number), each making up from twenty-five to one hundred beds, according to the size of the plantation and the number of Indian immigrants indentured to the estate. Each hospital is placed under a qualified dispenser and nurses, and is visited three or four times a week by the district medical officer.

The colonial hospital in Georgetown is one of the largest in the colonies, making up as it does more than eight hundred beds. The deaths, alas! are also very numerous. I have been in the mortuary when there were five corpses awaiting interment, and we had to turn them all over and examine them so as to identify one over which I thought it necessary to hold an inquest.



LEPERS' HUT, KAOW ISLAND, ESSEQUIBO RIVER. [*To face p.* 22.

CHAPTER II.

A thirsty country—Swizzles—Georgetown Club—Visits of the fleet—Swizzleiana—Pepper-pot—Miss Gerty's kitten—Planters—Mr. Henry Clementson—His burglary—Medical Service—Old-time doctors—The Bar—Dick Whitfield—Lynch—Samuel T. Fitz-Herbert—Macaronic verses—Church endowments—Cake walks—Rally of the tribes—Ladies in British Guiana—Sexual relations—Establishments—Children of the poor—Quasi-slavery—Roman Dutch law—Emancipation of women—Tigress of Tiger Bay—Tim Sugar—Assaulting the sheriff.

THERE is great truth in the soldier's remark that Demerara was a "rare place where there's lots of drink, and you're always 'a dry." The perpetual state of perspiration in which one lives in the colony creates a perpetual thirst, and I know no place where drinking is carried out on more scientific principles. The drink, *sui generis*, of the country is the swizzle. This subtle and delicious compound is sometimes ignominiously confounded with the cocktail, but though related, they are not identical. The cocktail is a stronger, shorter, and less sophisticated drink than the swizzle; there is no disguise about it; you know you are drinking something hot and strong, thinly disguised by the ice which cools without quenching its potency. But in the swizzle the potency is so skilfully

veiled that the unsuspecting imbiber never discovers he is taking anything stronger than milk, until he finds that his head is going round, and that the road seems to be rising up and trying to slap him in the face.

The ingredients of a swizzle are simple enough; a small glass of hollands, ditto of water, half a teaspoonful of Augostura bitters, a small quantity of syrup or powdered white sugar, with crushed ice *ad libitum;* this concoction is whipped up by a swizzle-stick twirled rapidly between the palms of the hands until the ice is melted, and the liquid is like foaming pink cream, to be swallowed at one draught and repeated *quantum suff.* This seems simple enough, but it is only one person in a hundred who can make a perfect swizzle; there must be a purity in the materials, an exactitude in the proportions, and a faculty for handling the swizzle-stick, which can only be acquired by long study and devoted attention.

The swizzle-stick is cut in the forests from a small bush, which grows so that the shoots all radiate from a common centre; so that when cut and trimmed to a proper length, you have a stick about fourteen inches long, as thick as a pen-handle, with four or five short spurs about an inch long radiating from the end. These shrubs generally grow in sandy places, and are numerous enough, as an old colonist remarked one day when he and I were cutting swizzle-sticks, "See how good Providence is to provide us with swizzle-sticks in this thirsty country!" Whisky or

brandy may be used instead of hollands for swizzles, according to the taste of the drinker. A swizzle is generally taken before breakfast and dinner; but pray remember that we get up at six o'clock, and work hard till ten, when we breakfast, and it is really not only a pleasant but a wholesome beverage. In Georgetown the sound of the swizzle-stick is heard all day; it is one of the common objects of the country, like those plagues the frogs and mosquitoes. There is no wrong without a remedy, and the soothing swizzle makes you forget the one and despise the other. The Georgetown Club is the headquarters of the perfect swizzle. This club, which was founded in 1858, has obtained a world-wide renown for hospitality and good cheer. There is an unwritten law in the club that no one shall drink alone, so the unwary stranger, who is admitted within its sacred portals, finds himself invited to drink by thirty or forty gentlemen on hospitality intent, and not wishing to appear rude and disobliging by refusing, finds himself by eventide very much mixed, and wondering how he is to find his way to his virtuous couch. Always hospitable to strangers, the Georgetown Club puts forth its full force when the colony is honoured by a visit from some of the ships of Her Majesty's navy. All the officers of the fleet are made honorary members; all their drinks are paid for; luncheons and dinners are provided for them; they can play billiards and cards all day and night free of charge. It is a perfect heaven for midshipmen and lieutenants.

In fact, the whole colony goes mad when the fleet visits its shores, and spends money recklessly in balls and fêtes, so that it becomes necessary to send round a picket of police every night to pull the midshipmen out of the canals which bisect all the streets. The big ships could never come nearer than fifteen miles from the city owing to the shoal-water, so that the naval officers were not able to show much return for our hospitality; but that was not what we wanted; we were only too glad to see them. However, the officers felt otherwise, and a handsome chiming-clock and a great silver punch-bowl, now in the Georgetown Club, testify to the gratitude of the sailors who, at different times, have enjoyed our welcome.

The swizzle has inspired our local poets to celebrate its fame in doggerel verse. One gentleman invokes his favourite drink as a goddess under the name of Swizzleiana:—

"When the rosy morn is breaking
And the moon pales in the west,
Then I call for thee, my darling,
Waiting, longing to be blest.
Swizzleiana! bewitching maiden!
Let me kiss thy rosy lips.

"When the noontide heat is glowing,
And I dally in the shade,
Then to calm my pulses throbbing,
Sweet! I call thee to mine aid.
Swizzleiana! bewitching maiden!
Cool my burning lips with thine.

"When the sun is quickly sinking,
And the toil of life is o'er,
Then I hear thy gentle sighing,
And I call for thee once more.

Swizzleiana! bewitching maiden!
Quench my troubles with thy kiss.

"Rosy, sweet, and cool and creaming,
Who with thee can e'er compare?
Eve, and noon, and dewy morning
Thou must come to me, my fair.
Swizzleiana! bewitching maiden!
Let me ever call thee mine!"

H. K.

My old friend Benson Maxwell, a son of the Sir Benson Maxwell, Chief Justice of the Straits Settlements, had evidently read Longfellow, for he published a parody on a well-known poem, as follows :—

"I know a mixture fair to see—
Take care!
It can both sweet and bitter be—
Beware! beware!
Trust it not.
It is fooling thee.

"It has two blends of great renown—
Take care!
It gives new life as it goes down—
Beware! etc.

"It has a crown of pearly hue—
Take care!
It looks a tempting, harmless brew—
Beware! etc.

"It has a charm to lull your pain—
Take care!
It bids you come, and come again—
Beware! etc.

"It gives a fillip of delight—
Take care!
It has a power to make you tight—
Beware!" etc., etc.

What the swizzle is to the drinking world, the pepper-pot is to the eating. This renowned dish is not so generally used as was formerly the case, but it is still respected in odd nooks and corners of the colony, where it is kept going from year to year without ever once getting empty; meat of any kind being added to it day by day, cassareep as required, and peppers and black sugar according to taste. In one country household, not long ago, a particular pepper-pot was never absent from the breakfast-table, and the host prided himself on its antiquity, which was frequently the theme of conversation when an honoured guest was being entertained. One day he was explaining to an English traveller that it was the only really characteristic dish in the colony; it was like the *pot-au-feu* in France; it was the curry of the West Indies; it was the receptacle of every kind of meat, wild and tame, even to monkeys. "And, I assure you," he said, "they are splendid in the pot—as good as labba. In fact, it is the housekeeper's blessing, and always a change at the breakfast-table, for you don't know what the spoon will bring up, wild or tame, ox or pig. For instance, what is this?"

Here the host placed on his plate an unshapely, bedraggled-looking mass, which he, with all his experience of the pepper-pot, could not classify.

"John" (to the butler), "what is this?"

John looked at it for a moment, and then exclaimed—

"Well done! Sah, if that ain't Miss Gerty's



FRUIT GIRL.



CREOLE OF SURINAM.

[*To face p.* 28.

kitten! It must have fallen in and drowded; and Miss Gerty and the missy blaming me because he didn't dey. Oh, me lard, sah, I is well glad that kitten is found at las!"

The number of white persons in the colony was very small in comparison with the rest of the population, numbering only about sixteen thousand, three-fourths of whom were Portuguese from Madeira and the Azores. Children born in the colony of white parents are called Creoles; but the name Creole is, in common parlance, indiscriminately and incorrectly used for all colony bred persons and animals. Black and coloured children are called Creoles, and we hear of Creole horses and Creole sheep.

Thirty years ago the planters were the great men in the colony; they were autocrats on their own estates, and for miles around; they were J.P.'s, and sat on the bench with the judge at the Inferior Criminal Courts; they were described in the Official Gazette as "gentlemen in charge of sugar estates," and, to Sir Henry des Voeux's indignation, they took precedence of stipendiary magistrates; storekeepers bowed down before them, and bankers did them reverence. But that was all changed before I left the colony—the old style of manager had disappeared. Most of the old planters were men of grand physique and great strength of character, with much ability and perseverance, but they were ill-educated and prejudiced, rough-mannered men who had been nurtured in the evil days of slavery. Some of the younger generation

were still powers in the land when I first went out, and several of them were good friends of mine. Mr. Edmund Field, of plantation Great Diamond, brother of Lord Justice Field; the Honourable William Russell, the "Sugar King," as he was called; and Mr. A. C. Macalman, were men of superior intelligence and social standing. One old planter, Mr. Henry Clementson, proprietor of Cuming's Lodge, was an eccentric man. I often went to his estate to spend Sunday with him. One afternoon we were smoking in his gallery, when we saw a waggon with a runaway horse dash along the road and upset just in front of Clementson's drive; one of its occupants was thrown out with violence, and lay on his back without moving. I started up, and was hurrying to his assistance, when Clementson called out, "Where are you going?" "To help that poor man; he may be killed." "Then what the devil does he mean by coming and dying on my road!" At one time Clementson kept a store in Water Street, Georgetown; and, as the fashion then was, he slept over his shop. One night he was awakened by a noise in his room, and, looking up, he saw a black man, almost naked, turning over the things on his dressing-table and opening his drawers. Clementson noiselessly slipped out of bed and made for the thief, who, hearing a sound, turned round, and seeing Clementson, who was a big man, and looked his biggest in his loose pyjamas, coming towards him, made for the door; but Clementson was too quick for him, and, as the thief passed into the landing,

jumped upon his back, and, putting his arms tight round his neck, was carried by the man headlong down the staircase into the street, where he tumbled, sprawling and yelling, into the gutter, Clementson still riding him like the old man of the sea.

The police were attracted to the spot by the noise, and the burglar was safely lodged in gaol. He was tried at the next sessions, and was sentenced to penal servitude at Massaruni for five years. About four years or so afterwards Clementson was sitting in his counting-house, when a big, burly nigger came in grinning and touching his wool. "Well," said Clementson, "what do you want?" "You no know me, sah?" "No, I don't." "Hi! me Gad! and yourself de same gentleman me carry on me back down into de street, and yourself too heavy for true." "Oh, it's you, you villain, is it?" shouted Clementson. "Get out of this at once." "Hi, Massa Clementson, gie me bit o' work now." But Clementson refused to have anything to do with him, so he went away grumbling at the ingratitude of mankind.

Of professional men the doctors were the most numerous, as might be expected. British Guiana is an ideal country for medical men. According to the Blue Book for 1895, which is lying before me, there were forty-six medical men in the Government service, one of whom drew £1100 as pay; another, £1000; eleven received £900; five, £800; seven, £700; six, £525; six, £500; two,

£450; two, £425; two, £400; and three, £300 per annum. And all whose salaries were under £900 received every year an increment to their salary of £25 until they reached that desirable result. In addition, each district medical officer drew £100 a year travelling allowance, and enjoyed private practice, which was, in some cases, very lucrative. In Georgetown one well-known and popular medico has for many years made more than £3000 per annum in addition to his official pay. There were also about half a dozen medical men who were not in the Government service, so I think we were well provided with medical attendance, considering that the whole population of the colony was only about 280,000 souls.

But although we may grumble at the cost, it must be confessed that the service is a credit to the Colony, and the members of it are, with few exceptions, highly trained, competent men. The old type of doctors has quite died out, the believer in calomel and quinine—the old twenty and twenty-four dose, as it was called. I heard an anecdote of one of the old-time medicos. A Scotch youth had yellow fever, and a Scotch doctor was sent for to prescribe for him.

"I shall dee, I shall dee!" cried the poor boy.

"Dee and be d——d!" said the doctor; "but you shall take sixty grains of calomel first."

The Bar in British Guiana, like most colonies, was composed of a very mixed lot of men. There were white, black, and coloured; some old Oxford or Cambridge men; others the grandsons of old

slaves, who, by perseverance and energy, had raised themselves to the dignity of "esquires, barristers-at-law." Several of the barristers were men who had failed in other pursuits, and, having the gift of the gab, had been called to the Bar in England, and returned to make what they could in the land of their adoption. One of the best and most amusing of these was Dick Whitfield, who had formerly been a dry-goods merchant; but failing in that interesting occupation, and being a voluble Irishman, he turned his thoughts to the law, and after an absence in England of a couple of years, returned a full-fledged barrister. Dick was an eloquent man, and would have succeeded very well at the Bar had he not been addicted to too much joviality, so that he got rather muddled in his head, and was sometimes not quite sure what he was talking about.

On one occasion I was presiding over a trial in Georgetown where the prisoner was accused of murder, and, as the custom was, Dick Whitfield had been assigned as his counsel. The case was a clear and simple one, and I was rather curious to hear what the learned counsel could say in defence. He called no witnesses, but proceeded to address the jury. "May it please your honour, gentlemen of the jury, when God planted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, they lived a life of blissful innocence and happiness. Joy was theirs, the fruits of the earth were their food, the limpid streams their only drink; they knew neither care nor sorrow. But, alas! the devil entered in; the

tempter was there,"—and so on, for some ten minutes. I interposed, "Really, Mr. Whitfield, I cannot see what this has to do with the case. You must come to the point." "I am coming to the point, your honour." However, he still went on with his biblical narrative; but when he had got as far as Noah's Ark, I again interrupted him. "Really, Mr. Whitfield, I cannot allow you to waste the time of the court in this way. Confine yourself to the case." But it was no use, he went on rambling over all kinds of subjects, sacred and profane, until he wound up abruptly by an impassioned appeal to the jury not to send the unfortunate man in the dock to a violent death, drew an affecting picture of the man's weeping widow and wailing children (there was no evidence that the prisoner had any children, and he was being tried for murdering his wife), and ended by a commonplace peroration, imploring the jury to remember the sanctity of their oaths and not condemn an innocent man. All his eloquence was of no avail. The man was convicted, sentenced by me to death, and was hanged in due course of law.

On another occasion, in the old Court rooms in the Public Buildings, I was presiding in the first court, when our proceedings were more or less interrupted by the great noise which some one was making in the precincts of the adjoining court. "Marshal," I said, "who is making that noise? Tell him to be quiet." The marshal returned, but the noise continued. "Marshal,

make that man be quiet—or bring him before me, and I will commit him." The marshal retired again, and came back alone. When I glared at him, he replied with a covert smile, "Please, your honour, the noise is caused by Mr. Whitfield addressing the jury in the other court." It was Dick's burning eloquence that was raising all the echoes in the old Public Buildings.

Once in Berbice, at the Criminal Sessions, the Supreme Court was opened with the usual ceremonies. I was on the Bench; there were two or three barristers at the Bar, amongst them Whitfield, who had a very boiled look about his eyes. A prisoner was arraigned, and, as soon as the clerk of the court had read the indictment, Dick arose, and said, "I wish your honour to take an exception to this indictment." "Very well, Mr. Whitfield," said I; "now is the time to do so." Whitfield then began some rambling remarks which I didn't follow; so, after a few minutes, I remarked, "I don't follow you, Mr. Whitfield." "I was saying, your honour," and so on, as before. "I really cannot follow you, Mr. Whitfield." "Perhaps your honour would allow me to see the indictment." "Certainly," said I. The document was handed to him. After gazing at it for some time, "I beg your honour's pardon," he said, handing back the parchment to the clerk, "I thought it was the other man," and sat down amidst a general tittering in the court. He had mistaken the case for one in which he was engaged. During the same session, however,

Dick scored one off us. He was defending a prisoner, and one of the principal witnesses for the defence, who had been examined before the committing magistrate, and whose deposition was before me, was never called by Whitfield, and, as the Attorney-General had expected to extract some information from this witness in cross-examination, it was natural and right that, in his reply to the jury, he should comment upon the fact that this witness had not been called for the defence. Dick sat tight and said nothing. When, in my turn, I proceeded to sum up the case to the jury, I also, in reviewing the evidence, commented upon the fact that the principal witness for the defence had not been called, and remarked that the Attorney-General's strictures on his absence were well merited. Then Whitfield arose, "I beg your honour's pardon for interrupting you, but perhaps I had better explain why the witness in question was not called; because he is beyond your honour's jurisdiction—he is dead." And he sat down with a placid smile on his countenance, which was reflected in the faces of the jury.

Another time when I was sitting in Chambers in the first week in the year and proceeding to transact business, Whitfield burst into the room, and seizing one of my hands, exclaimed, "A happy new year to your honour! God bless you! Don't you wish we were all back in old England." Judge and Bar were much astonished at this outburst.

Mr. Lynch, the elder, was a barrister, who for many years filled a large space in the eye of the

public, both literally and metaphorically. He was a large and powerful negro with a soft voice and pleasant manners. He was very successful in defending prisoners, and was an adept at bullying witnesses and extorting admissions in good Old Bailey style. The late Mr. William Russell once described him as "a good shovelman spoiled," which came to Lynch's ears, and which he never forgot. Once Russell had a lawsuit, and his adversary having briefed the leading members of the Bar, Russell was advised to go to Lynch. When Russell went to that gentleman's office and explained his errand, he was met with the remark, "So you have been compelled to come to the spoiled shovelman after all."

In 1872 Mr. J. Trounsell Gilbert was Attorney-General of the colony. Mr. William Haynes Smith (afterwards Sir W. Haynes Smith, K.C.M.G., Governor of the Leeward Islands) was Solicitor-General. Mr. Gilbert soon afterwards died, when Mr. Smith became Attorney-General, and Mr. Atkinson (the present Mr. Justice Atkinson) Solicitor-General. My greatest chum at that time was Samuel T. Fitz-Herbert, a Cambridge graduate, and a barrister who was practising in Georgetown. He was a bright, clever little man, fond of his rubber, game of billiards, and cheery glass. He was a gentleman, and at that time the manners and customs of the Bar in Georgetown were not to his taste. Touting and all kinds of unprofessional conduct were rampant, and he could not descend to such practices; so he found himself somewhat

isolated, and the ground cut from under his feet. He did not stay long in the colony, but exchanged it for the more congenial soil of New Zealand, where he married and prospered. Fitz-Herbert had a great facility for writing verses, humorous or macaronic, parodies, and such like. When we were separated, I used to receive from him comical letters in rhyme, one or two of which are worth repeating. For example, take the following sapphics, parody of the celebrated needy knife-grinder of Canning and Frere :—

"Lazy H. Kirke, whatever are you doing?
Why are you not here, toiling at the great work,
Which shall exalt its editors as heroes
Of immigration?

"Say, does the fragrant weed nicotiana,
Stowed in a shapely calumet of meerschaum,
Not without Bass his amber-beaded nectar,
Woo thee to leisure?

"No such excuse have you, you lazy beggar,
Saving that mentioned in the second stanza;
Snug in armchair methinks I see thee lying,
Lazily dreaming.

"Are you at leisure meditating coolie
Cases, which may be brought before your washup
When on next Monday you sit as a great sti-
pendiary Justice?

"Hang round the doorway Asiatic suitors;
Lie on the table summonses neglected;
Flutter notes not decipherable by your
Own coadjutor.

"Lazy, unfeeling, swizzle-loving justice!
Shameless, work-shrinking, putter-off of duty,
I have a crow to pick with you, your washup,
Over a cocktail.

S. T. F.

"*May*, 1873."

There is a genuine ring about these verses. Another amusing parody was sent to me from Suddie, whither Fitz-Herbert had gone to defend a prisoner at the Essequibo Criminal Sessions :—

"From Suddie's sea-washed station,
Aurora's sandy plain,
Where groweth each plantation,
Th' almighty sugar-cane :
Down Essequibo river,
By water, mule and mail,
Come jurors to deliver
The prisoners from the jail.

"What though with misplaced kindness,
The Governor allows
The coolie in his blindness
To chop his erring spouse :
What though the daring nigger
Still steals the straying goat,
Yet still we'll make him figger
In light grey prison coat.

"In vain with native rudeness
Both Carbery and Lynch,
And Atkinson, with shrewdness,
Would make the jurors flinch.
Shall we who clothe in linen
And wash ourselves with soap,
Shall we to coolies sinning
Deny the hempen rope ?

"Assizes ! oh, Assizes !
The awful sound proclaim !
Till coolies and their wiveses
Shall tremble at its name.
Tell, telegraph, the story,
The credit and renown,
Till spreads the jurors' glory
From Suddie to Georgetown ;

"Till o'er the peaceful native
A blessed quiet reigns,

Till he's a thing creative
  Of sugar from the canes.
Till happy immigration
  Be freed from every toil,
And minus legislation,
  Each vacuum pan shall boil."

"Hæc tibi mittebam calamo currente magister.
  Fausta satis sedes ipse magis Valeo.
Me tamen expectas aderit quum tertia Luna;
  Nil mihi rescribas sum rediturus enim."

I was living at the Thomas House, near Georgetown, and the night before the Durban race meeting I had asked Fitz-Herbert to dine with me. He was unfortunately laid up with a small wound caused by some poisonous insect, and Dr. Cameron would not allow him to walk. So he sent me the following absurd verses:—

Damnatæ noctes, multo damnatius iste
  Κωνῶπος pennœ mussat in aure sonus.
Heu! Thomasina domus quam longa est semita, quantum
  Vulneris inviti per mea membra dabas!
Testator Cameron per honorem Pharmacopolae
  Ut nimis hesterno vespere gressus erim.
In pede vulnus inest, distillat vulnere virus,
  Et mea per sellas forma supina cubat.
Necnon crass metuo ludos ut cernere possim
  Quum quatitur sonitu quadrupedante solum.
Τὲτλαθι μὲν κρὰδιη, nam sic cecinere poetœ
  Si tu faustus eris quod tibi sunt numeri?
In festus sperat vice versâ et cœtera (Flaccus).
  Sic veteri calamo νικοτιην meditor,
Sic inter risus sic inter pocula Bassi,
  Haec temerè e thalamo carmina condiderim.
At Carolus (sacer iste puer) mihi nuntiat Indos
  Usum grandiloquæ legis habere meœ.
Jamque Vale! feror umbrellâ circumdatus albâ.
  Sacra tibi et sponsœ proxima pocula erunt.
    Ant. XV. Kal. Ap. et pridie ludos Romanos.

I remember on one occasion trying a case in the Supreme Court (limited jurisdiction) in which the defendant was called Jonas. The learned barrister, who appeared for him, had an unfortunate habit of bullying his own witnesses, if they did not say exactly what he wanted them to say; so he used to attack them with, "My dear man, do attend to me!" "My good fellow, if you cannot speak up I must abandon your case!" "That was not what you told me in my chambers," etc. In this case, as the defendant Jonas was rather obscure in his answers, counsel became exasperated, and shouted out, "My good man Jonas, do come out of that whale's belly of yours, and answer the questions properly!" This was too much both for the court and Jonas—the former became hilarious, and the latter irascible.

There being no circuits nor benchers in the colony, practices which would be looked upon with abhorrence by English barristers were continually common amongst members of the local Bar. Advertising and touting were not unknown. Any fees were accepted. One coloured barrister is said to have defended a prisoner before a magistrate, his honorarium being a box of sardines. This may be an exaggeration, but I know that two dollars were often accepted as a fee in such cases. There was little or no distinction between barrister and solicitor, except that barristers and advocates had the sole right of audience in the supreme civil and criminal courts sitting in their full jurisdiction. There were, however, many lawyers who

upheld the dignity of their profession, and never condescended to low practices.

Few things in Great Britain have occasioned more disputes and jealousies than the rich endowments of the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches. They have stirred up the bile of all the numerous Nonconforming sects throughout the country. Our predecessors in British Guiana were endowed with wisdom enough to see this; so, to prevent such squabbles, and to induce the different religious sects to live in harmony, they, instead of discountenancing endowment, went into the other extreme and endowed them all. The Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and Wesleyan Churches were all well endowed by the State, and even the stubborn Congregationalist is not too proud to accept an occasional grant from the Government for his Church and missions. Churches not receiving State aid are often hard pressed to find the sinews of war. Theirs is a hard fight, and their ministers deserve the highest credit for their efforts to maintain their position among Christian sects. They are compelled to consult every sentiment and weakness of their flocks to attain their ends; jealousy, emulation, love of dress and display, are all appealed to, and not in vain. Cake walks, pink teas, "rallies of the tribes," are resorted to to raise money. Some of these performances seem childish and even sometimes ludicrous, but I suppose they attain their object, and the end justifies the means.

A cake walk is conducted as follows. All the members of a congregation are invited to subscribe and take tickets, costing a bitt, or a bitt and a half, or a shilling each. Several cakes are baked —cake-making being a specialty amongst the coloured folk—and on an appointed evening all the subscribers flock to the chapel or schoolroom in their best clothes. The organist takes his seat at the harmonium or piano at the end of the room, with his back to the guests. The subscribers form a procession, two and two, and we may be sure that lovers, engaged couples, and mutual admirers manage to get together. A small flag is then handed to the leader, the music strikes up, and the subscribers march round the room in time, singing as they go; the flag is handed from one couple to the next at each verse of the hymn or song, and so travels down the line until the music suddenly stops, when the couple in whose possession the flag is found are declared winners of a cake; and so it goes on till the cakes and the guests are exhausted.

A "rally of the tribes" is a more complicated business. There are twelve tribes of Israel, each commanded by a captain and lieutenant. The numbers of each tribe are unlimited, and may consist of as many persons as can be persuaded to enlist. A card is given to each member for collecting subscriptions. Bitts, sixpences, and shillings are collected, which are represented on the cards by dots, circles, and stars respectively. The rally is held in the church, and each tribe

has to hold a stall, decorated with palms and flowers, for the accommodation of its members. On the Sunday when the rally is held all the people assemble at an appointed place, each person wearing a band with the name and colour of his tribe, the captains' bands being more conspicuous than the others. When properly marshalled under their respective banners, all the tribes march in procession to the church, singing, "Onward, Christian soldiers," and perambulate the sacred edifice before entering, after which the usual Sunday service proceeds, each tribe occupying its own stall. There are three services in the day, and after each service four of the tribes report. The minister calls each tribe by name, which under its captain marches to the Communion rails. The captain, in a loud voice, announces that the tribe of Gad, or whatever tribe it may be, is prepared to report. "Report, then," replies the minister. The captain then reads out the subscription collected by his tribe. After the four tribes have reported, the procession is reformed and marches out of the church to the rendezvous, and there disperses. The rally is the most successful mode of raising money; sometimes hundreds of dollars are collected. As in European countries, the women are the chief supporters of the ministers, and what with their rallies, pink teas, jealousy Sundays, cake walks, Christmas trees, and blue-paper collections, raise a considerable sum of money annually for the services of their Church.

I cannot leave this part of my subject without

saying something about the fair sex, the ladies of British Guiana; but here I feel that I am treading on delicate ground. The relation between the sexes in young communities or in slavery-tainted colonies is not so well regulated as in older and more advanced civilizations. Mrs. Grundy did not thrive in British Guiana as in more temperate climes. Perhaps the damp, warm climate was relaxing to the moral as well as the physical fibre of the community. As this book is not written "for men only," I shall have to omit many interesting and peculiar incidents of life in the colony, although I am told that the New Woman is only too glad to hear and discuss the most unsavoury sexual details. In the earlier part of the century there were few white women in the colony, so it was customary for the managers of estates, merchants, and other white men, to have what was called an establishment, presided over by a black or coloured woman, who looked after the servants and the comfort of her master generally.

The offspring of this connection were, as a rule, kindly treated by their father, who brought them up, sent them to Scotland or England to be educated, and of such are most of the coloured doctors, barristers, etc., whom we have in our midst. By degrees, as ladies began to accompany their husbands to the colony, and communication with England became more frequent and more rapid, and when men went home to get married, and a regular English society was forming itself,

these establishments began to be regarded with disfavour, and, as the cause of them was removed, they gradually disappeared. The objection to the negro taint, the "touch of the tar-brush" as it is locally called, is not so strong as in America and some of the West Indian islands. Several white men have married quadroon women, who are now holding a high position in local society. English women seem to stand the climate better than men. It is true that they lose their roses and become pale, and some of them suffer from debility and anæmia; but the death rate amongst them is not half that of men, and they very rarely succumb to yellow fever. This may be owing to their more temperate lives, and their freedom from exposure and fatigue.

With regard to the sexual morality of the lower classes of the community, it may be gathered from these pages when I come to deal with the different races which compose it. The standard is very low, but outward decency is regarded, and a lady can walk about the streets of Georgetown at any hour of the day or night without seeing any of those external symptoms of vice which disgrace so many English cities. One of the saddest features of the colony is the condition of the children of the poor. There seems to be a spirit of lawlessness amongst them, an impatience of control, a thirst for independence and license which bodes ill for their future and the future of the colony. The boys are idle and dissolute, the girls dirty, foul-mouthed, and dishonest. At an

age so early as to be almost incredible, many of the former become thieves, and the latter prostitutes. This state of things is owing in a large degree to the casual connections which are made between the sexes, the offspring of which are generally abandoned by the father and neglected by the mother, so that they either die or grow up as I have described. The infant mortality in the colony is frightful, and often called forth the stringent remarks of the late Dr. Manget when he was Surgeon-General of the colony. There is a curious kind of quasi-slavery existing. Every black and coloured woman in the country, except the very poorest, has always some girl in her possession whom she, as she describes it, "cares for;" that is, the child works for her all day, sweeps, goes errands, and performs all menial offices, in return for which she gets blows and curses, no pay, a pittance of food, a cotton frock, and a pair of drawers, and the bare floor to sleep upon. These girls have been given up by their mothers, who found them an incumbrance, or who were too poor to support them. Of course, when the unfortunate girls reach the age of thirteen or fourteen they are sold to some Portuguese shopkeeper by their mistress, or else, anticipating matters, they each choose a boy for themselves and go off with him.

The Roman Dutch Law, which is the common law of the colony, must be held responsible for some of the irregular connections entered into by the more respectable black and coloured

people. By the subsequent marriage of their parents, children born before wedlock are legitimized; so many respectable girls become concubines to men and live with them for years, being wives in all but name, in the hope and expectation that their keepers will marry them eventually, and place them and their children in a legitimate position. Such being the law, the concubine, so long as she lives with a bachelor, has a recognized status, and is not an object of reproach as in other countries.

At a wedding party in Berbice, when the health of the bride and bridegroom had been warmly drunk, the fond bridegroom rushed into a bedroom, brought out a fine two-year-old boy, placed him on the festal table, and said, "Isn't he a beauty—our only son, and he is two years old to-day?"

In the colony, the women are quite emancipated and act independently; if one man vexes them or ill-uses them they leave him and go to another. The black women are quite as strong as the men; taking the average, I should say they were stronger, and quite ready for a fight at any time. I remember one woman who was called the Tigress of Tiger Bay (a low locality in the city); she was a match for any three policemen, and was a terror to the neighbourhood.

Another woman, who went by the soubriquet of Tim Sugar, was a rival of Jane Cakebread, as she had been in prison more than fifty times. Whenever she was released she always celebrated the

event by getting drunk, stripping off her clothes, and in her nudity dancing a wild can-can on the pavement.

I was once a cause of merriment to my friends by an adventure which happened to me, and which was thus described in a local newspaper:—

"ASSAULTING THE SHERIFF.—At the close of the performance in the Philharmonic Hall, while the audience were wending homewards, several officers of the fleet amongst them, a young lady, disposed to be friendly to the visitors, gave a staid, dignified-looking swell a ringing slap on a stoutish part of his body, and called out in complimentary glee, 'Hi! here's a real nice fat one.' She thought she was doing honour to the Queen's navy, but when the gentleman turned round she found she had made an awful mistake. The poor frightened, innocent thing ran off screaming, 'Ow! Ow! me gad! me gad! I'd tink it was sailor and it am the Sheriff heself.'"

CHAPTER III.

Colonel Foster-Foster—"Home"—Coloured gentry—Census paper—Curious returns—The Zoo in Georgetown—List of animals—German warship—Learning a new language—Plain vernacular—Amusements in British Guiana—Racing—D'Urban racecourse—Blood stock—Georgetown races—Belfield—Cricket—Ted Wright—English teams—Chinese cricketers—Black players—Dancing—Creole—Congo—Hindoo—Reminiscences—Officials in British Guiana—X Beke—Military force—White troops—West Indian Regiment—Soldiers burial-ground—98th regiment—Withdrawal of troops—Venezuelan raid—Uruan—Capture of the post—Vixen—'Varsity dinner—Mr. James Crosby—Crosby office—Insect plagues—Cockroaches—Ants—Centipedes—Hardbacks—Marabuntas—Electric light—Gas—Beckwith's hotel.

One of the most amusing and interesting men in the colony was my old friend Colonel Foster-Foster. A cadet of an old Cumberland house, he had joined the army, but seeing no chance of active service, he accepted a commission in the Austrian cavalry, and with his regiment saw considerable service in Italy and elsewhere. He was a blood of the old type, and bore on his body the scars of many wounds received in action or in duels; the most remarkable one being a red line six inches long, which showed where an enemy's sabre had inflicted a serious scalp wound. When the Crimean War broke out, Foster volunteered

for service in the English army. Of course red tape prevented him being employed with the regulars, but he was placed in command of a body of Turkish irregulars or Bashi-Bazouks. These were good fighting material, and Foster soon brought them into action. After the close of the war, Foster's fighting days were over; he obtained a grant of land in Vancouver's Island, and, when there, commanded a battalion of volunteers or militia, I forget which. He was subsequently appointed a stipendiary magistrate in British Guiana. In the course of his campaigns, he had gone through very varied experiences; and, like most old warriors, he was great at spinning yarns. One of his best stories—and one which it required several splits to get out of him—was about the Crimea. "When I was in command of part of the Turkish contingent, the Russians one night made a furious sortie upon our position. After some hard fighting we drove them back. As we were repairing damages, the Duke of Cambridge rode up with his staff, and called out in a loud voice, 'Who commands this detachment?' I stepped forward, and saluting, said, 'I do, your royal Highness.' 'Your royal Highness be d——d, sir!' cried the duke, leaning forward on his horse, and grasping me warmly by the hand, 'Call me George—call me George!'"

The colonel was a great cook, and very particular about his food. The cooks in Demerara have a bad habit of cooking joints of meat early in the afternoon, and then warming them up again

just before they are wanted for dinner. This arises in the main from their ignorance as to the length of time required to roast or boil any particular piece of meat. The colonel had a great hatred of this practice, which he said, and justly, made the meat sodden and tasteless. One day, when I was staying with him, he said, about half-past five o'clock, "I have a new Johnny as cook, so we had better go and see how he is getting on, and tell him to put the meat to roast;" so we stalked into the kitchen, where we saw the beautiful little sirloin, on which the colonel's principal hopes for dinner rested, already cooked, and cooling out on the dresser. The colonel's moustache bristled with rage, his face became purple; and, seizing the unfortunate cook by the scruff of his neck, shouted out, "Oh, you're another of these hell-fire warmers-up, are you? Out you go!" And giving the writhing man a vigorous kick, he sent him flying down the steps headlong into the compound below.

One of the most touching incidents of colonial life is the universal use of the word "home" amongst all classes of the community, when speaking of England. A colonist never says that he is going to England or Scotland, as the case may be; he always says he is "going home." In his conversation he always talks of "home." "When I was last at home." "They do these things differently at home." "What's the news from home?" are phrases continually used. This assumes a somewhat ludicrous aspect when you

hear these phrases from the mouths of black and coloured people, who, in many cases, have never even visited any part of Europe. We had a good laugh at the expense of a young coloured youth, who was swaggering about and saying that he "was going home by the next mail;" when an elderly Scotch gentleman quietly asked him, "Oh, you are going home, are you? And what part of Africa may that be?"

The conceit and affectation of some of the young generation of mulattoes and quadroons is astonishing. I am delighted to see any young coloured man by honest work and good behaviour raise himself to a high position amongst his fellow colonists, and many have done so. In my time there was a coloured chief justice in Barbados, a coloured solicitor-general in Trinidad, and in Demerara we had coloured gentlemen as legislators, magistrates, barristers, clergymen, mayors, and doctors, and they were treated with as much respect as white men in similar positions; but when these gentry began to talk of their family and "home," and sport crests, and coats-of-arms, one was inclined to laugh, remembering from whence they sprung.

The population of British Guiana increases very slowly; the death-rate is so much higher than the birth-rate, that there would be an actual decrease if it were not for the immigrants brought from India and the West Indian Islands. As in England, a decennial census of the people is taken. This is a matter of some difficulty, and the returns

are sometimes very peculiar. The people cannot understand the several headings, and how the columns are to be filled up.

The following examples from the census papers of 1881 were collected by an enumerator as a sample of the eccentricity or ignorance of the people. One citizen gave his name as "John," head of the family, "is a male;" and then under the column of "Profession, Rank, or Occupation," he puts down, "Can't get nothing to do for the last six months, and can't pay house rent, has got a keeper and four children, they in Barbados, but is coming to Demerara." This same column of profession, rank, or occupation is filled in with some peculiar information, *e.g.* one person's occupation is put down as "sickly;" one is an "invalid;" another is "cuck;" whilst one admits he is an "idler;" and another ambitious person claims to be a "scoller;" one says he is a "farmer, sick of a cough;" and one yearling's occupation is entered as "sucker." The column devoted to deaf and dumb, blind, or imbecile, or idiot and lunatic persons is not less interesting. One man says that he has no "infurrities;" the next man in the list writes "dito;" whilst a neighbour says he is "romantic;" another says he had "no orflections;" whilst one citizen puts down as an affliction that he has "been black from his birth;" another that she is "cob in complexion;" and a third that she has a "black mother and a Portuguese father." An east coast resident says he was born at "Larry Sophenear," which is his way of spelling Le Resouvenir. One

man returns himself as having been "born near town, and is belong to the Weslen Church." One gentleman, employed in working a punt, indulged himself in a long family history. After entering his name and occupation, he enters his wife's name—"is my wife, is a female, not married yet, but will marry she in May; she is dimisticated, is close washer. She is not inflicted, and is got two boy children for Joe in Barbados, and two is dead. Is got two for me, they can't read nor right yet." Under the column "Relationship to Head of Family" many peculiar entries were made, owing to the social conditions of the population. Most of the lady friends of doubtful relationship are put down as "wives," although the next column unblushingly puts down their condition as "unmarried." In many cases, however, there is no attempt at concealment, and they are variously described as "mistress," "keeper," etc., although one man in plain language describes his friend as "concubine." One gentleman makes a distinction by putting himself down as "head keeper." In the column headed "Condition as to Marriage" one gentleman writes "community of goods;" whilst one old lady describes her three daughters as "virgins." One lady in plain language writes "knot." In fact, she is a knotty individual, as she describes her occupation as "knothing in particular," and her infirmities also as "knot." The column of occupation reveals the fact that four-fifths of the women living alone are "washers." There are, however, exceptions. One of the lonely

ones describes herself as a "bottle swopper;" and another says that "she cook for sheself." One gentleman is proud to say that he is "a porter in the mercantile line." Most people have some knowledge as to where they were born, but in that column one entry is "no say." Under the head "Infirmities, Deaf, Lunatic," etc., an old man, after describing himself as "lonely," adds he "loose a leg." One lady is suffering from "stomach pains;" but another is "healthy generally, but at present suffering slightly from fever." One wag says his only infirmity is "want of money." A very afflicted family is that of a certain enumerator who writes himself down as suffering from "structure;" his wife from "nervousness;" his son is "partly rupted;" and his daughters have "dry belly ache." One poor man, utterly ignoring the columnar divisions of the paper, gives us the following pathetic tale: "Me name is James Horner, i is 32 years old, and i work punt in the river, i is married, but keep one Barbadian woman who dead November last year, she name Rebecca Kemp clothes washer 28 year old and she dead November last year and i too sorry for she."

When I was chairman of the Directorate I tried to establish a Zoo in the Botanic Gardens in Georgetown. At first the idea was taken up with enthusiasm, and subscriptions and animals poured in upon me in embarrassing profusion; but I was called away to act as Attorney-General of Jamaica, and after my departure the project languished, and the animals either died or were sent to the English

Zoo. It may amuse my readers to see a list of the animals which were sent to me during the first few weeks of the undertaking. When we had a large python in a tub under the house, an ant bear in the stable, a hacka tiger in the scullery, and several small evil smelling mammals all about, my wife began to object, as she was persuaded that the python would arise some night in his might and make a meal off one of the children, and the small mammals were disgusting to her olfactory nerves. An armadillo that I bought dug a hole in the garden and produced a litter of five young ones. They were the most comical little beasts —just like grey india rubber dolls, and when you squeezed them they squeaked in the same way. A Brazilian porcupine got away one night; the next morning I saw an excited crowd in the next street, and a black boy rushed in to us, exclaiming, "Please, sah, they be find your pimplerhaag" (prickly pig).

LIST OF ANIMALS PRESENTED OR PURCHASED.

Small Sloth	Purchased.	
Ocelot	From Mr. Morrison.	
Hacka tiger	Presented by Hon. Howell Jones.	
Sackiwinkie monkey ...	Purchased.	
Ring tail monkey	,,	
Toucan	,,	
Porcupine	Presented by	Mr. G. Humphreys.
Rattlesnake	,,	Mr. Wood Davis.
Large Anaconda	,,	Mrs. Thornhill.
Yrwarri rat	,,	Mrs. Bridges.
Beza monkey	,,	Mrs. Murray.
Red howling baboon ...	Purchased.	
Brazilian porcupine	Presented by	Mr. Brodie.
Two Curassow	,,	Mr. Kaufman.

Horned owl	Presented by	Mr. Odlum.
Large python	„	Mr. Long.
Sackiwinkie monkey ...	„	Mr. Bridges.
Large ocelot	„	Mr. Curtis.
Labba (hollow-cheeked paca)	„	Mr. Ibbott.
Toucan	„	Mr. Crosby.
Pair of ring doves	„	Mr. Odlum.
An Accourie	„	„
Four peacocks	„	Mrs. Gemmel.
Water haas	„	Mr. Hewick.
Armadillo	„	Captain Arnot.
Large ant eater	Purchased.	

Although the Zoo was a failure, we kept some interesting animals in the gardens. In one lake were two mannatee, and great was our excitement when one day we found a young one playing on its mother's back. Two tapirs, locally called mypourie, wandered about at their pleasure; some water haas played about in a small pond; and a few of the graceful deer of Guiana grazed in a paddock. As to birds, the gardens were full of them. My daughter, Mrs. Percival and her husband, published a list of those they had personally observed, amounting to one hundred and twenty distinct kinds.

We sometimes received visits from the French and German warships. I can remember when a German training ship came to the colony many years ago. The captain and his officers were a jovial crew, and fully appreciated and reciprocated the lavish hospitality which was showered upon them. The German Consul gave a ball in their honour; in the card-room I made the fourth in a rubber, with the gallant captain as my partner. As we picked up our cards after the first deal, he

said to me, "Mein Herr! ven I 'ave a tromp I plays a tromp, and ven I don't play a tromp, you will know I 'ave not got a tromp." And so he did, and the result was that I lost twenty-six shillings in the first two rubbers. It is a curious fact that the first words of a new language, which are acquired by casual intercourse with its speakers, are generally vituperative or indecent ones. The first Hindustani words learnt by the English soldier are those of cursing and abuse. I have heard an English gentleman pour out a string of abusive epithets upon some unfortunate natives, which, if they had been translated into their native tongue, the most blasphemous bargees would have shrunk from using. Cursing in Hindustani is of extreme ingenuity, and puts to shame the monotonous expletives of our native land. I once travelled with a Frenchman, who was proud of his knowledge of the English language, which he said he had acquired by residence in England, but his conversation was seasoned with vulgar and indecent words. Amongst such a polyglot people as those inhabiting British Guiana, the first efforts of each race to acquire the language of the other strikingly illustrates my proposition. On one occasion a Hindoo boy about eleven years old was brought before me, having been summoned by an old black man for using abusive and insulting words to him. I explained the charge to the boy, asked him whether he did it or not, to which he promptly answered, "It's a bl——y lie, sir." He had no intention of being disrespectful to the

court, but wished to explain his innocence in the usual vernacular which he heard in the village.

An east coast parson held a baptismal service. The candidate was not an infant in arms, but a sturdy three-year-old Creole coolie boy. He was with difficulty coaxed to the font, and the priest began to read the office. All went well until he dipped his hand into the font and sprinkled the water on the up-turned face of the boy, who not understanding the nature of the ceremony, darted a surprised and angry look at the parson, yelled out, "You d—d beast!" and attempted to run away. The parson said he never was so shocked in his life.

A story was current in the colony of a Portuguese recently arrived from Madeira, who, wishing to propitiate a coloured maiden, whose charms had touched his susceptible nature, was heard murmuring in mellifluous accents under her window the only English words which he had acquired, "Son of a beetch, son of a beetch," and was much astonished when he was violently assaulted by the outraged damsel.

Amongst the black people there are some words which have been handed down from their Congo ancestors, the original meaning of which they have forgotten, but they know they are very bad words, and the use of them to each other by black women generally results in violent assault and bloodshed. Such words as "Kokkabuddoo" and "Pê-hê," applied to a woman, are supposed to be the last

resource of foul abuse, but I never yet met any person who could explain to me what the words meant.

Amusements in British Guiana are much the same as in other English tropical colonies. The energy of the English race shows itself in an exposure to the sun and a scorn for the heat, which excites the wonder and contempt of foreigners. Cricket and lawn tennis flourish exceedingly; rifle shooting and racing have their old-established clubs; golf has been started, but has not caught on, although it would seem to be a game peculiarly suited to the climate. Racing is the most popular amusement amongst all classes. There were race meetings at different parts of the colony at a remote period of its history; but a regular race club was not established until 1829, when the first meeting was held at Colony House on the 28th of September in that year, His Excellency Sir Benjamin Durban presiding. The existing racecourse, which was presented to the club by the same Governor, and named after him the Durban Racecourse, is just outside the limits of Georgetown. It is an oval, one mile and ninety-six yards in circumference, and cost 11,580 guilders to make up. The course is perfectly flat, like the surrounding country, with some sharp curves. There are two meetings annually, spring and autumn, when about £1500 is given in prizes at each meeting, besides a cup, value £50, presented by the Governor. The first races on the Durban Course were held on the 3rd and 4th of November, 1829, and, with the

exception of three years (1843–45), they have been held regularly ever since.

In the early days of racing we find some good bloodstock in the colony: amongst others, "Cobb," by Popinjay, out of Muck-bird, formerly belonging to Lord Glenorchy; "Murillo," by Magistrate—Rosalba, bred by the Earl of Derby, and foaled in 1824. In 1834 Mr. Edward Duffy advertises in the local papers his bloodstock, etc., for sale. A thoroughbred entire horse, "Morpeth," by Roller; two brood mares; "also the slaves Joseph and Tommy, both young men and well disposed." Later on we see advertised the thoroughbred horse "Croft," by Whalebone, dam by Lancer—Priscilla, by Highflyer; also the stud horse "Gift," bred by Lord Bangor, got by Collector, dam by Queensbury. The principal jockeys in those days were white boys from England; their names were George Farrell, Caldow, James Watson, Davis. "Lord George," which belonged to my old friend Mr. H. G. Parnell, was a distinguished racer. He was a brown entire horse by Lannercost, and half-brother to Van Tromp, winner of the Epsom Derby in 1847. Another horse of his called "Lucy," a brown filly, was by Charles XII., winner of the St. Leger, Liverpool Cup, etc.

The Colony Cup was established in 1829, and the Durban Course Cup in 1852. In later years good horses have been imported regularly, so that in the veins of our Creole horses runs some of the best blood of the English turf. "Little Hampton" and "St. Bruno" were amongst the sires, and of

the dams the pick was that grand mare Dagmar, daughter of Peter, who for two years swept the board at all the race meetings in the West Indies.

The races were always well attended by all classes; white, black, coloured, Hindoo, Chinese, Portuguese, all meet and jostle one another on the course; the noise is deafening, the excitement intense, especially when some horses from Trinidad or Barbados are entered, when colonial rivalry is in full swing. Gambling, cheating, drinking, and fighting go on in a most cheerful way, and no one seems much the worse for it. There is always an immense amount of wrangling between the black people over a bet, the loser not wishing to disgorge, and if there be a stake-holder he is generally absent when the race is over. I once asked my butler, Bailey, if he had been betting at the races, and he replied, "No, sir; how I bet, suppose I lose, I lose; suppose I win, I must fight for my money."

There is a good country meeting held twice a year at Belfield on the East coast, where an amusing day can be spent.

There is an excellent cricket ground belonging to the Georgetown Cricket Club, with a fine pavilion, and all the paraphernalia of a first-class ground. The turf is as good as that of an English county club, although sometimes, when it is most wanted, it is flooded with water and more suited for a regatta than a cricket match. A Challenge Cup has been established to be competed for by Trinidad, Barbados, and British Guiana, and the contests for its possession produce good cricket and

much local enthusiasm. In 1895 Mr. R. S. Lucas brought a team of English cricketers to the West Indies, and they played two matches in Demerara; and in 1897 Lord Hawke visited the colony with Messrs. Leveson-Gower, P. Warner, Bardswell, Bromley-Davenport, Heseltine, and other good cricketers. We had some good cricketers in the G.C.C., notable amongst others, Mr. Edward Fortescue Wright, Inspector of Police, who had been well known in Gloucestershire as a cricketer before he came to the colony, and who made for himself a lasting name in West Indian cricket annals. He was an excellent all-round cricketer, good bowler, brilliant field, and one of the hardest hitters I ever saw. It was a splendid sight to see Ted Wright, when he was well set at the wicket, open his shoulders and knock the balls about; the first whack up against the palings, the second over the pavilion into the road beyond, another went flying into the Lamaha Canal; and all without any apparent effort. In a match against Trinidad, in 1883, he beat their whole eleven off his own bat. At athletic sports I have seen him throw a cricket ball 119 yards.

The drawback to cricket in the colony was the absence of any club able to compete with the G.C.C. on anything like equal terms. Once the club received a challenge from a club of Chinese cricketers to play the second eleven of the G.C.C. It was an amusing match. The G.C.C. won the toss and went in; they made one hundred and fifty, without the loss of a

wicket, so the innings was declared closed, and the Celestials took to the wickets. About the third ball the captain was given out l.b.w., but he refused to go, saying, "Me no play that way." In the next over he was caught by the wicket-keeper, but he still refused to budge; and it was not until his middle stump was knocked out of the ground by a yorker that he allowed he was out, and stalked off to the pavilion muttering strange Chinese oaths. Despite their sticking principles, the Chinese eleven were disposed of for thirty-six runs; and in the follow on they were not more successful. The black and coloured people are madly fond of cricket, every available open space of ground is full of them playing the game in one form or another. Little boys play on the sides of the streets with an empty kerosine oil tin for wickets, and the rib of a palm leaf for a bat. Some of them attain a certain proficiency in the game. I remember at a celebrated match between the Government secretariat and the police, the Inspector-General put on police-constable David to bowl. He was an enormous black man, six feet six inches in height, and as he bowled he retired twenty yards behind the wicket and advanced to the attack whirling his right arm round like a windmill; when he reached the bowling crease he stopped short and delivered a terrific underhand grub straight on the wicket, which somewhat disconcerted the batsman, who was not accustomed to such a style of bowling.

Dancing is also a favourite diversion. Creoles,

white, black, and brown, all dance spontaneously; they require no teaching. The black people dance beautifully; I never saw better waltzing in my life than at some of their dignity balls.

Dances are frequent in Georgetown; and there are a number of places called "practising rooms" much frequented by the young coloured people, where other amusements besides dancing are, I fear, practised. At their balls, dancing is kept up with spirit from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m.; the people behave very well, and there is little or no drunkenness. At their fancy dress balls, the costumes of the black people are marvellous. At one to which I had been invited, a tall, stout, black woman represented Queen Victoria; she had the place of honour on the dais; an obsequious courtier was fanning her, and, seeing that her Majesty was perspiring freely under her robes and crown, suggested a little iced water, but the Queen replied, "No buddy no waater, me tak' a little able (strong) punch."

The Africans (Congos, Kroomen, etc.) have some native dances which they perform at times, such as the kumfoo and others; but these are of a grossly lascivious nature and not often to be witnessed. The Hindoos have nautch dances at the festival of the Mohurrun and at weddings, but the dancers are almost always boys dressed up as girls.

Most books of reminiscences are filled with the author's recollections of great men, royalties, authors, statesmen whom he has met, what they

said, what they wore, and what they did; bonsmots and quips sparkle in their pages, and although many of them are chestnuts, and have been told over and over again, they help to enliven their chapters, and leave the reader with the impression that the author has, during his life, moved in the highest circles; like Mr. Turveydrop's reminiscences of the Prince Regent, they are evidence that he was fitted to shine in the best society My readers might naturally expect from me similar records. I might be expected to give details of interviews with the royal princes, noble lords, and gallant admirals who, during my residence in the colony, visited the shores of British Guiana. The many excellent gentlemen who have resided amongst us as governors might provide a fund of anecdote and wit; but, to tell the truth, I have not the slightest recollection of any anecdote or witty remark associated in any way with these illustrious visitors or great men. One comical incident I recall which occurred in the Executive Council. A Government official had been suspended, and was being examined as to his misdeeds before that tribunal, when one of the members asked the culprit, "Mr. B——, I understand, sir, that you are living in adultery." "No, sir," was the reply, "I am living in a two-storey house."

Guiana, like other British possessions, boasted a governor and commander-in-chief, a colonial secretary, an auditor-general, a receiver-general, an immigration agent-general, an attorney-general, a solicitor-general, a postmaster-general, an

inspector-general, a surgeon-general, an administrator-general, other generals, and innumerable subordinate officials, who were all required to govern a population as big as that of a fourth-rate English town. I have already stated that what astonished me most on arrival in the colony were the frogs and the mosquitoes; but I must add that when I found that the President of the United States, who ruled over more than 50,000,000 of people, received a salary of £5000 and a residence, whilst the Governor of British Guiana, who governed a population of 250,000, received £5000 and a residence, £2500 for contingencies, and all his wines and spirits admitted duty free, I was still more astonished. The Yankees seem to have discovered some disparity in the salaries, for I understand of late years that they have raised the pay of their President to £10,000.

There was one notable exception to the general dulness of our official class, and that was our genial Administrator-General, who could pour forth an endless stream of anecdote, and who, under the *nom de plume* X Beke, has published some amusing yarns about his experiences as a Government official in the West Indian Islands. He was more fortunate than I have been, though it must be confessed that some of his stories might have reference to what happened in the island of Barataria under Sancho Panza's beneficent rule.

In the old days a considerable military force was maintained in British Guiana. There were troops in Georgetown, New Amsterdam, and

detachments were stationed at Mahaica, Fort Wellington, and Aberdeen. The mortality among the soldiers was excessive. Owing to the stupidity of the War Office, regiments were generally brought down from Halifax or Canada, often at the most unfavourable season, and crowded into insanitary barracks. Yellow fever carried them off by scores; and at last the home authorities refused to send any more white troops to the colony; so we were relegated to the protection of the West Indian Regiments, which were composed of negroes officered by Englishmen.

Hundreds of gallant men, who had fought in the Peninsula and Waterloo, left their bones in the dreary soldiers' burial-ground at Eve Leary, unrecorded and uncared for. It will ever be a pleasing reminiscence for me that, owing to the assistance of Lord Gormanston—himself an old soldier—I was able to make their graveyard somewhat decent, enclosing it with a neat fence, and planting it with ornamental trees. When I first went out, Demerara was the headquarters of the 2nd West Indian Regiment, Colonel Wise in command. When the first Ashanti war broke out, the regiment was sent to Cape Coast Castle, and their place was temporarily filled by a company of the 98th Regiment from Barbados, under Major Scheberras, with Captain Tibbs and Lieutenant Allen. The general in Barbados was much alarmed about the health of these white troops sent to our pestilential shores, and ordered the officer in command to send him frequent telegrams and reports. But so much

changed were the drainage and accommodation of the barracks that, although the white troops remained with us more than a year, not a single man died, and very few found their way into the sick list.

When the Ashanti campaign was over, we had alternate detachments from the 1st and 2nd West Indian Regiments; but their numbers were gradually diminished, until, in 1890, the troops were withdrawn altogether, and we were told to protect ourselves, which we have done by forming a body of armed police, and by the establishment of a militia force. Our dispute with Venezuela and the United States about our boundary necessitated additional precautions, so two Maxim guns were imported, and Fort William Frederick, at the mouth of the Demerara River, was armed with modern artillery.

In 1893 some Venezuelan soldiers made a raid upon our territory in anticipation of Dr. Jameson's celebrated invasion of the Transvaal, but they lost themselves in the bush, and after enduring great hardships from hunger, damp, and insects, were discovered, to the number of twelve, by some Indians, who guided them down to Bartica, where they were arrested by the magistrate. He didn't know what to do with them, but as they had some rusty old rifles with them, he ordered them to be charged for carrying guns without a license, and as they had no money to pay their fines, he sent them to the Georgetown Gaol. Here the Governor released them, fed and clothed them, and sent them by the

first steamer to Bolivar. Uruan was our outpost up the Cuyuni; and in 1894 Inspectors Barnes and Baker were seized by the Venezuelans and carried away, and the police-station was looted. I had given Barnes my little fox-terrier bitch "Vixen," when I was going on leave, and he took her with him to Uruan. Unfortunately she died there, and Barnes buried her, and put up a monument over her grave. When the Venezuelans descended upon them, the ignorant soldiers thought that poor Vixen's tombstone was a boundary mark, so they dragged it out with great indignation, and hurled it into the river.

Like most English colonies, we established an annual 'Varsity dinner, where we have mustered as many as sixteen graduates of Oxford and Cambridge. Foremost amongst them was that grand old man, for fifty-two years Bishop of Guiana, William Piercy Austin, prelate of the most distinguished order of St. Michael and St. George, who took the greatest interest in these convivial meetings, and always attended when he was in the colony. Amongst others I may mention his son, the Rev. William G. Austin, of Magdalen, Oxford, who rowed in the 'Varsity crew at Putney; Mr. James Crosby, of Trinity College, Cambridge, of whom more anon; Edward Everard Rushworth, of St. John's, Oxford, who administered the government of the colony in 1873–74. Three judges of the Supreme Court, John Hampden King, of Skimmery; C. H. Lovesey, of Queen's, Oxford; and John Tankerville Goldney, Cambridge,

now Chief Justice of Trinidad. The Rev. Canon Smith, of St. John's, Cambridge, was a regular subscriber to these dinners; and I can recall J. Ernest Tinnè, of Trinity College, Oxford; Gilbert Robertson Sandbach, of Brasenose; Alfred Parker, of University; Edward Everard im Thurn, of Trinity College, Oxford; Exley Percival, of Brasenose, and many others.

Mr. James Crosby was one of the best-known men in the West Indies. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, he was called to the Bar, and was employed by some sugar proprietors to plead their cause in the courts of St. Vincent. Here he continued to practise, and obtained a moderate success. There was a good story told about him in St. Vincent. He had defended a murderer before the Supreme Court, but the man was convicted, as Crosby thought, on insufficient evidence; so he appealed to the Governor, who, however, refused to interfere with the finding of the court. So when Crosby went to inform the prisoner, he was highly indignant, and told the doomed man, "Never mind, never mind; let them hang you, and then they shall see what the consequences will be to them;" but the poor man did not see it in the same light. Mr. Crosby was appointed Immigration Agent-General and Protector of Immigrants in British Guiana, and there he so identified himself for nearly thirty years with the welfare of the large East Indian population, that he became a sort of deity and impersonation of protection, so the department was called "Crosby Office." The

chief himself was known as "Burra Crosby Sahib;" and all the sub-immigration agents lost their personality, and were known as "Chota Crosby Sahibs;" and although the old man has been dead and gone for many years, his successors have been compelled to bear his name, and every coolie in difficulty announces his intention of going "to see Crosby."

Mr. Crosby died in 1880, having had apparently as many lives as the proverbial cat. He was an energetic old man, and although seventy years of age would go to balls and dance away like a youngster. On one occasion at the Assembly Rooms, as the company were leaving at 3 a.m., and we were lighting our cigars in the hall, he astonished us by precipitating himself down the staircase, and falling headlong into a large flower-tub; he was picked up and sent home in charge of a medical man, but next day he turned up all right. A few weeks afterwards he went to a croquet party at Government House, and hastening across the ground to shake hands with a lady friend, he tripped over a hoop, and fell into a box full of mallets, breaking one of his ribs. Shortly afterwards, when he had repaired damages, he paid a visit to England. On his return in the *Don*, they encountered bad weather; but the dauntless Crosby must go up on deck to see what was going on, so not unnaturally he fell head-foremost down the companion, and broke his collar-bone and one of his ribs, besides spraining his wrist. This kept him quiet for the rest of the voyage; but not many

months afterwards, he broke a bone in one of his legs, and taking to his bed, he never left it again alive.

To residents in equatorial climes the immense insect tribe is a source of annoyance; their name is legion, for they are many. The great chestnut-coloured cockroaches are destructive, foul-smelling brutes, to be slain without benefit of clergy. Ants of all sizes and colours simply exist in billions, black, red, brown, white, and grey, varying in size from the huge solitary ant as big as an English spider, to the minute sugar ants, of which several hundreds could stand on a shilling without crowding.

Ants are ubiquitous; if you leave a little sugar at the bottom of your coffee cup, in a few minutes it is covered with ants; if you kill a cockroach and leave its carcass on the floor, in a short time it is hidden under a swarm of ants, and in a couple of hours all sign of it has disappeared. There are great columns of ants called yakman, which march through the country, devouring everything as they pass. If your house is in the line of march, you must vacate it till the column has passed, which sometimes takes two or three days. One good thing they do, they clear your house of vermin, devouring every centipede, scorpion, and cockroach, and all the young bats and mice which cannot save themselves by flight.

Brown centipedes six inches long are common in old houses, and smaller and more venomous black ones have a nasty habit of hiding in one's

boots. I remember one day in the seventies I was dining with Edmund Field at Plantation Great Diamond; a Captain Ross from England was staying with him, and coming in late, he ran upstairs to dress for dinner as quickly as possible. Before long, we heard him coming gaily downstairs humming a tune, which was suddenly turned into a yell, and when we hurried out to see what was the matter, we saw poor Ross sitting on the stairs tugging frantically at one of his dress boots, which he flung off, and then sat nursing his foot and groaning. Field picked up the discarded boot, and giving it a shake, out dropped a small black centipede which had been curled up inside. Ammonia and other remedies were applied to the suffering foot, but although Ross joined us at dinner, he had lost all his appetite.

When the rains begin, Georgetown is invaded by a kind of black beetle, locally known as "hardbacks." These are sometimes so numerous as to interfere with our social functions. Dining one night at the Mess of the 2nd West Indian Regiment, at Eve Leary Barracks, we couldn't eat our dinners for the showers of hardbacks which fell into our soup and wine, filled our hair, and crawled down our backs.

On another occasion, at a grand ball at the Assembly Rooms, the hardbacks were so numerous that men with brooms were employed to sweep the floor, piling the beetles into buckets for removal; dancing was out of the question, as with every step you crushed a hardback; and if, as the poet

says, "the beetle crushed beneath the heel feels the same pang as when a giant dies," the amount of anguish in that ball-room on that night must have been stupendous. The ladies were tormented as the insects filled their hair, and crawled up their dresses and down their necks.

Flying ants are also at times a great nuisance, as they hustle into the room by thousands, and the moment they touch anything their wings drop off, and they run about in all directions. Newcomers are often startled by the great green mantis, who alights upon their heads and folds his hands in an attitude of prayer. A large brown wasp, called a marabunta, builds his pretty paper combs under the eaves and galleries of our houses; his sting is severe; whilst the mason bees build their curious circular mud-houses, like rows of Esquimaux huts, on the backs of your books and sofas, and on the fronts of your pictures and your blinds.

The electric light was introduced into the city some years ago, and it was a curious sight to see the great arc-lights surrounded by myriads of insects, moths, hardbacks, beetles, until the ground, for yards around, was black with their fallen bodies.

Gas was first used in 1872; the first gas-lit ball was in February, 1873, when Admiral Fanshawe and the North American fleet paid us a visit. The negroes were much astonished at the new light; they could not understand how it burnt without oil; they were continually climbing up the lamp-posts, putting their fingers in the flame and exclaiming, "Eh! me Gad! it burn."

When I first went out to the colony, there was only one decent hotel in Georgetown, kept by a sturdy old Yorkshireman and his wife, by name Beckwith, where I secured a bed on my arrival. Dining with Mr. Stephens two nights afterwards, I returned to the hotel about 11 p.m., and was surprised to find it locked up, all lights extinguished, and no signs of life about the place. I hammered at the door for some time without success; at last some one descended the stairs and opened the door, and I beheld old Mr. Beckwith in his night-gown and night-cap, with a lighted candle in his hand. I asked him what the devil he meant by locking me out of the house, and threatened to leave him and go elsewhere in the morning. "You may go as soon as you like," he replied. So feeling snubbed and angry, I retired to my room. Next morning I related my experiences to Alexander Reid, the manager of the Colonial Bank, and announced my intentions of leaving Beckwith's at once, and going to a better managed place. He laughed and said, "But where will you go? There is no other hotel which is fit for you to stop in." So I had to make the best of it; and hearing that Mr. Beckwith came from Leeds, I began to talk to him about his native town, the improvements made since he left it, the new Town Hall, the new bridge at the bottom of Briggate, etc., until I won the old man's heart, and over a glass of his particular sherry we became quite chummy, and he told me that if I ever expected to be out late to tell him, and he would order some one to sit up for me.

Beckwith was what 'Arry would call a "harbitrary gent." He caught one of his boarders, a gentleman connected with the Panama Telegraph Co., making love to the ladies' maid, and he put him out of the hotel, bag and baggage, in an hour. His amorous propensities got the same gentleman into further trouble, for going to St. Thomas, and being caught by the Governor of that island making love to one of his daughters, he was ordered to leave the island within twenty-four hours and never return.

CHAPTER IV.

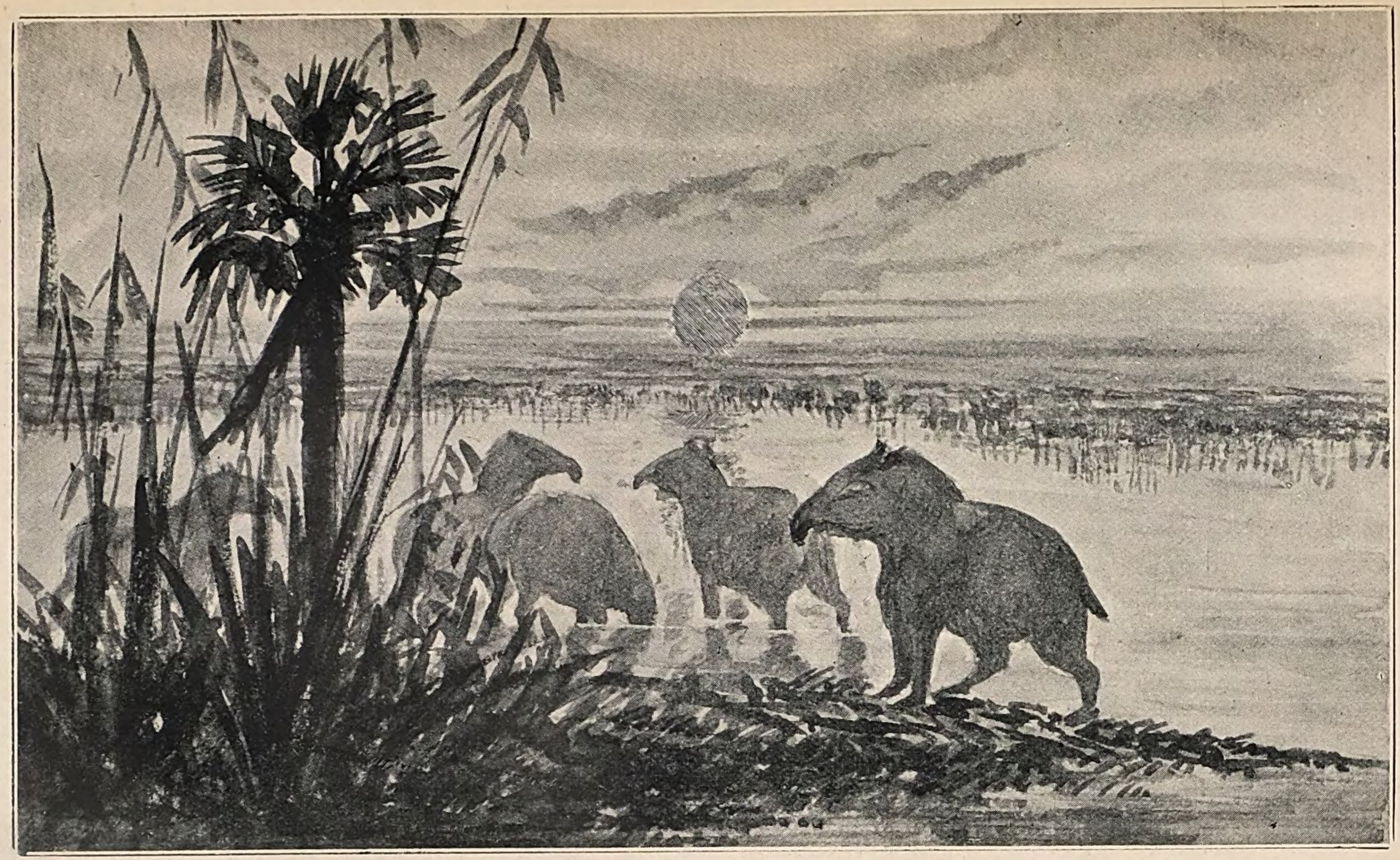
Equatorial zone—Tropical vegetation—Forests—Striking effects—Gardens in British Guiana—Fauna—Shooting—Game bags—Muscovy ducks—Hoatzin—Jaguars—Waracabra tigers—Deer—Peccary—Tapir—Monkeys—Iguanas—Snakes—Fishing—Cuffum—Lukananni—Cannibal snakes—Essequibo and Aroabisce coast—Old-time planters—Racecourse—Hospitality—Practical jokes—Clergy—Dean Austin—Rev. William Brett—St. John's Church—Medical officers—Riot on the coast—An awkward predicament—A faithful sentry—Sheriff Humphreys—Anna Austin.

THE world, according to the geography books of our youth, is divided into five zones—two frigid, two temperate, and one tropic—although a little girl of mine, in answer to her governess, described the latter as the intemperate zone—an unconscious sarcasm. But there is another zone, rarely mentioned by the teachers of youth, but which has been clearly delineated by Wallace, Bates, and other naturalists, viz. the equatorial belt, which stretches about ten degrees on each side of the equator. The climate, flora and fauna, of this region differ materially from the other portions of the tropics.

Within this belt hurricanes and typhoons are unknown, whereas they are felt at their worst between the tropical line and the equatorial;

vegetation is of the most luxuriant nature, temperature being high, rain abundant, and windstorms absent. But, despite their grandeur and density, visitors to this region are generally disappointed by the equatorial forests. They have heard of the gorgeous flowers of the tropics, and they expect to see something extraordinary and striking to the eye. As a matter of fact the tropical forest is singularly sombre and devoid of bright colour; any flowers that exist are at the top of the trees, one hundred feet above your head, whither also fly the bright butterflies, and the brighter birds which feed upon them. You may journey for hundreds of miles through tropical forests without seeing any bright flowers or conspicuous masses of colour. At times such things happen. I remember once on a reach of the Demerara River for about three miles the trees of the forest on one side of the stream were covered with a bright purple creeper, which fell in festoons from the tops of the trees, and was reflected at length in the placid water. Lit up by the slanting rays of the sun, the woods presented a blaze of glory which I have rarely seen equalled.

Of course, in cultivated places, where trees are planted for effect or use, some grand aspects are created. I remember, in Jamaica, driving for a mile through an avenue of flamboyant trees which were literally covered with their brilliant crimson and scarlet flowers; the effect was painful to the eyes, so vivid and gorgeous were the tones.



IN THE WET SAVANNAH. [*To face p.* 80.

Another time, riding in Trinidad down a gorge from the mountains, the whole valley before us was filled with a rich golden glow, caused by the setting sun shining on the flowering oronoque trees, which lined both sides of the valley. In Demerara about sunset, when the flowers open, a broad trench, forty feet wide and a mile long, filled with the Victoria Regia lily, is a wonderful spectacle. The air is laden with the heavy scent from the flowers, rising between the great round leaves four to five feet wide. At the Cabacaburi mission, on the Pomeroon River, there was a huge ceiba tree, whose trunk shot up for seventy feet in the air before the branches began to expand. This trunk was entirely surrounded and hidden by a gorgeous coloured climbing plant, which, when in full flower, turned the old ceiba into a pillar of gold, seventy feet high, and four to six feet wide, which, under the blaze of the setting sun, presented a floral spectacle which I have never seen surpassed.

Gardens in British Guiana are, as a rule, disappointing, and, after a time, one looks upon them as frauds. Roses, except the strong tea-scented ones like Maréchal Niel, will not flower successfully. There are no flowering plants such as abound in English gardens and greenhouses. The only conspicuous and beautiful objects are the flowering trees and creepers—the bourgainvillia, alamanda, various tropoeolums, and ipomoeas, with the magnificent blue convolvolus, called "morning glory," and the lovely pink coraleta,

pinkest of pink flowers, flower continually all the year round, and cover house, verandas, and palings with never-ending beauty. There are many flowering trees, which once a year are a blaze of glory; but the flower borders can only be filled by crotons of many kinds, poinsettias, coleus, and such bright-leaved plants, which look always gay, and furnish a wealth of colour. Caladiums are a troublesome weed in the canefields, and silver ferns border every watercourse. Ferns are beautiful, and grow luxuriantly. Orchids, except when in flower, are hideous plants, and are best kept out of sight. One of the only successful pot plants is the lovely eucharis lily, which is easily grown, and flowers luxuriantly; zinnias, cockscombs, balsams, sunflowers, grow up, flower, and die, with a rapidity which is astounding, and it is only by continuous sowings that any show of such flowers can be maintained. Nothing in British Guiana is done in moderation; you are either drowned out with water, or else scorched to death by the sun. One day you will be digging little trenches to get rid of the wet; and in a week you will be watering vigorously with a hose to prevent all your plants dying of drought. Two or three days of scorching sun and drying trade wind will change a blooming garden into a desert, unless constant care be exercised. The soil is a stiff clay, which cracks and gapes under drought, and the surface becomes baked into a substance like adobe. All the sand, ashes, manure, etc., which you put on it, and dig into it, seem to

disappear like magic. The learned gardener and botanist, who for many years was superintendent of the Botanic Gardens, has often told me that, in all his life, he never knew any soil so unsuitable for gardening purposes as the soil in the neighbourhood of Georgetown.

Despite the enormous forests swarming with animal life which stretch for two thousand miles to the south and west of British Guiana, and the innumerable rivers and streams which pour through the colony into the Atlantic Ocean, the amount of shooting and fishing to be enjoyed is very limited. In the forest itself the bush is so thick that you cannot see ten yards ahead, and the undergrowth so dense that you might be surrounded by game, without being aware of their presence. I have spent many days shooting with the Indians, and of my own unaided efforts I should never have killed or seen anything; but the natives are endowed with what seems to us a marvellous faculty for discovering the haunts of birds and beasts, and with their help I was sometimes able to kill a few maroudies, a kind of wild turkey, and maam, a sort of large rail. Monkeys and sloths may often be killed; and in some places water haas and labba are plentiful. The Indian hunter never fires his gun unless he is certain to kill. Time is no object to him, whereas powder and shot are valuable; he will waste a charge upon a deer, labba, or mypourie (tapir), because he considers it worth the expense; but in shooting marondi or powis, he will lie on his belly for an

hour, watching a small flock feeding, until two or three of the unsuspecting birds get their heads in the line of fire, before he draws the trigger. Our game bags would rather astonish the English sportsman. Turning over my diaries, I find an entry under September 8th, 1873. "Mora, upper Demerara River, went out shooting with Simon (an Arawak Indian), killed five maroudies, one monkey, two acouries, one armadillo, and two snakes." Sometimes at favourable seasons large bags may be made. A party of five gentlemen, shooting for a week on the Abary Creek in October, 1894, made a record score, fishing and shooting. Their list of slain was as follows:—105 pigeons, 12 parrots, 2 cranes, 57 iguanas, 5 toucans, 5 carouws, 1 macaw, 37 muscovy ducks, 29 quaacks, 10 bitterns, 15 sundries (including negrocop and heeries), 1 water haas, 1 manatee, 274 fish (cuffum, lukananni, yarrow, etc.).

On the flat bare coast lands negrocop and white cranes are at times seen in large numbers; and curri-curri and spoonbills may be shot by enthusiastic sportsmen; but what we understand in England by a day's shooting can seldom be enjoyed; the nearest approach to it is when the golden plover and snipe are in season, when good bags may be made in the swampy pastures on the coast.

The finest game bird in the country is, without doubt, the wild muscovy duck. This magnificent bird grows to an enormous size, and it takes a very heavy charge and a very straight gun to

bring down a full-grown drake in his flight. The size and fatness of these birds is astonishing, and they make a magnificent dish on the table. Birds weighing from six to eight pounds are frequently shot, and I have heard yarns of drakes reaching ten to twelve pounds; I have never myself seen them larger than eight pounds; but that was quite big enough to satisfy me.

There are also some smaller teal ducks to be met with in the wet savannahs, which are beautiful in plumage and succulent when cooked.

Amongst the myriads of birds which thrive in British Guiana none is stranger than the one called the hoatzin, canje pheasant, or stinking pheasant. This is a large handsome bird, resembling, as its name implies, the well-known pheasant of the English woods, and which is found in several parts of the colony. It is most plentiful in the Canje Creek, and lower Berbice River: but they have also been met along the Cotinga River and on the Takutu. They are not eaten, as far as we know, by men or animals, owing to a peculiar and unpleasant odour exhaling from the flesh, especially when the bird is dead. But the great peculiarity of the hoatzin lies in the fact that it is a species apart, a sort of survival from antediluvian times: it is distinctly archaic, presenting affinities not only with many extinct kinds of birds, but also with the lower classes of the batrachians and reptiles.

Of large game few are killed; jaguars are common, but are only destroyed when they become

a nuisance by destroying cattle. They are very bold, and come quite near to town in search of their prey.

Mr. David Spence, an overseer on one of the sugar estates, is a noted tiger slayer (the jaguars and all the great cats are locally called tigers). He has killed many tigers at the back of the estates on the east coast: one at Plantation "Ogle," only three miles from Georgetown, which measured eight feet from the nose to the end of the tail. The jaguar is the handsomest of the great cats: he is taller and stouter than a leopard, and his tail is shorter. There are several kinds of leopards in the interior of the colony, one quite black, and another with a curious mottled and striped skin, which is called the "clouded tiger." There is a mysterious beast in the forest called by the native Indians the "waracabra tiger." All travellers in the forests of Guiana speak of this dreaded animal, but strange to say, none of them appear to have seen it. The Indians profess the greatest terror of it. It is said to hunt in packs (which tigers never do), and when its howls awake the echoes of the forest, the Indians at once take to their canoes and wood skins as the only safe refuge from its ravages. Mr. C. Barrington Brown, in his book "Canoe and Camp Life in British Guiana," says that one day, when he was on the Curiebrong River, a branch of the Massaruni, he had a curious encounter with these animals. To quote his words: "I was busy writing letters when my attention was attracted by our

two dogs, which had been tied up, barking furiously, followed by a great stir in the camp. Then some voices proclaimed loudly, 'The tigers are coming!' and one man called to me to come down as quickly as possible to the boats and bring my gun.

"Thinking at the moment that a couple of jaguars had been heard close by, I seized my gun and made a rush down the slope, eager to get a shot at one, when, to my surprise, I found the beach deserted. Where some twenty Indians had been camped, there was now not even a hammock left; all had suddenly and completely vanished, leaving only a stray hammock-pole and the smouldering fires. My men had all taken to the boat, and had it afloat, with the bow barely grounded, in readiness to shove off. They greeted me with cries of, 'Quick, quick! the waracabra tigers are coming!' There was quite a flutter of relief amongst them when the boat was pushed off into mid-stream, when they all began to talk excitedly over our escape. The dogs still gave tongue, and were even more excited than the men, the hair on their backs standing erect as they sniffed the air in the direction of the camp. I eagerly inquired what were waracabra tigers, and was hastily informed they were small but exceedingly ferocious tigers; that they hunted in packs, and were not frightened by camp fires or anything except the barking of dogs. We crossed the river, and as we stopped a shrill scream rent the air from the opposite side of the river, not two hundred yards above our camp, and waking up echoes

in the forest, died away as suddenly as it rose. This was answered by another cry, coming from the depths of the forest, the intervals being filled up by low growls and trumpeting sounds, which smote most disagreeably on the ear. Gradually the cries became fainter and fainter, as the band retired from our vicinity, till they utterly died away. Seeing nothing of them, and hearing their diabolical screams, I pictured them in my mind as a withering scourge sweeping through the forest. The call of these animals resembles that of the waracabra or trumpet bird (*Psophia crepitans*), hence they have obtained the name of waracabra tigers. The Accawoio Indians call them y'agamisheri, and say that they vary in size as well as in colour. As many as a hundred have been seen in a pack."

Mr. Bernard told me that a similar adventure with waracabra tigers occurred to him up the Massaruni River.

These strange animals cannot be felidœ, as they are never known to hunt in packs. Their screams recall recollections of the packs of jackals in India; so I suspect they must be animals of the jackal or wolf tribe, especially as they are said to live in the mountains, and only come to the low land in the dry season, and when pressed by hunger. I was reading the other day about the wild dogs in India, which are detested by the shikari, as they sweep whole districts of game, and even attack the imperial tiger in his lair. It is possible these waracabra tigers may be a similar species.

There are three kinds of deer which are

frequently met with and shot on the savannahs, but their flesh is, as a rule, dry and tasteless. Two kinds of wild pigs roam through the forests, the wild boar and collared peccary, locally known as the karouni and abouya; the tapir crashes through the undergrowth and rolls in the mud on the banks of the forest pools, but it is a long and tedious process to get within shot of any of them. Sometimes, indeed, droves of wild hogs invade the provision grounds on the banks of the rivers, and are slaughtered in great numbers by the infuriated farmers.

Animals of the monkey tribe are, of course, exceedingly common. The red howling baboons assemble in flocks, and make night hideous with their strange roarings. When I was living in Essequibo, an oronoque tree opposite my bedroom windows was sometimes alive with a flock of the lovely little sackiwinkie monkeys. Green and black-tailed monkeys were always to be found within a mile of my house. I have often shot monkeys, but I was cured of this bad habit in 1879. Walking aback of Belfield, in Essequibo, I shot at a monkey which was climbing up the trunk of a tree, and brought it to the ground. I went up to where it fell, and saw it sitting on the ground with the most piteous expression of countenance I ever saw. The tears were running down its cheeks; it was uttering a low moaning sound, and gazing into my face, pointed to its breast, whence the blood was oozing through the wounds which I had caused, as much as to say, "Oh, cruel man! see what you

have done!" I was filled with remorse, had the poor beast taken to my house, bound up its wounds and nursed it, but without avail; the poor animal died the same night. I have never since that day fired at a monkey.

Iguanas are common all over the colony, and are shot or trapped for the table, as they make a delicious fricassee or curry, almost rivalling the celebrated crapauds which I enjoyed in Dominica.

Guiana is the home of the great snakes. The huge anacondas and pythons reach their greatest bulk in the moist forests of the interior, but they are frequently met, and of a large size too, on the coast. I have killed and seen killed many camoudies, as they are locally called. The largest I ever saw was eighteen feet long, and as thick as a man's thigh. This one was measured immediately after death. Skins are not to be trusted for measurement, as they are very supple, and can be stretched when drying to one-third more than their natural length. I have, however, no doubt that anacondas have been seen and killed in Guiana more than thirty feet in length. I have only once known a camoudie attack a man. A coolie was getting water by the side of a water-path, when a camoudie shot over him and wrapped itself round his body and left arm. Fortunately his right arm was left free, so, seizing his cutlass, he chopped the snake with it and severed its backbone, which rendered it powerless. The snake was only eight feet long, and why it attacked the man I cannot imagine. When I was living in Essequibo the camoudies

used to eat all my ducks. One day when I was in my bath I heard the cook calling out, "Master, master, come quick!" so, picking up my gun, I rushed downstairs into the compound, and saw a great commotion in the water of the trench behind the house, and the wing of a duck showing above water. I fired both barrels into the turmoil, and killed a young camoudie nearly five feet long, and also a fat duck which had been seized by the snake, but which I recovered and subsequently ate for my dinner. In my excitement I had forgotten my condition, but the giggling of the women and girls who had collected reminded me that I was stark naked, so I bolted upstairs in some confusion. There are many other kinds of snakes of smaller dimensions, some of which are venomous, but I never heard of any fatal accident from their bites. Your dogs, however, are often killed by them when you are out shooting or hunting.

There are also many beautiful snakes which are quite harmless, but which are always destroyed by the ignorant, who have the impression that all snakes are dangerous. Rattlesnakes are very common in some parts of the colony, and are dangerous when irritated.

Coming back to my sporting reminiscences, I remember that the fishing was very good at certain times and places. It was only about the time of my arrival in the colony that any attempts were made to catch fish with the artificial fly, although it was well known that the native Indians sometimes caught fish by skimming a hook, to which

two or three bright-coloured feather shreds were attached, backwards and forwards over the water. However, it was soon discovered that several fish would rise at a fly, and some good sport was experienced. The finest fish for sporting purposes is the cuffum, a large fish of the herring species. My old friend, B. J. Godfrey, always asserted that it is the same fish as the tarpon, which affords such splendid sport in the lagoons of Florida, and I believe he was right. It is a handsome fish, silvery, like a salmon, with large scales, and the gamest fish I ever hooked. He has been caught in our rivers and creeks up to 20 lbs. in weight, and when hooked he makes some determined rushes. When he finds he cannot free himself, he makes tremendous leaps in the air, coming down with a splash that makes you tremble for your tackle. The cuffum has a bony palate, and the sides of his mouth are like parchment, so that it is very difficult to hook him securely. A dozen fish may be touched for one that is landed. He is generally caught with a red and white mackerel or gaudy salmon fly; but the largest fish are caught with live bait, like trolling for pike. As I have said, I have never known cuffum caught with a rod over 20 lbs. in weight; but I have seen a fish over 5 ft. in length, which was caught in a net off the mouth of the Mahaica Creek.

The lukananni is a beautiful fish, something like an English perch, and is a most excellent fish for the table when fresh caught; unlike the cuffum, which is rather poor and bony. The lukananni

are very plentiful in the creeks when the water is running off the savannahs, and the fish are making their way into the rivers. They are caught with a large trout or small salmon fly, and are very game so long as they are running under water or leaping above it. If, however, after a few minutes' playing, you can get their heads above water, they open their large mouths, and seem to get helpless for a time, and may then be caught in the landing-net, so long as the line is not slackened for an instant. They are caught from ½ lb. to 6 lbs. in weight. They are a bold fish, and bite freely, generally taking the fly under water. Their mouths are large, so the flies used should not be small; and as the waters of the colony are all dark, it is desirable to work with bright-hued flies. I have known some excellent sport with lukananni. Mr. George Bagot, of Annandale, killed in one day over 100 fish, from 1 lb. to 6 lbs. in weight. Mr. M. Keppel North and myself in two days caught 155 lukananni, weighing from ¾ lb. to 5 lbs. each, average weight about 1½ lbs., all with the artificial fly. We only fished for about five hours each day. On another occasion, Captain Arnott, Mr. John Menzies, and myself caught 172 lukananni in one day.

Lukananni bite best from 7 to 10 a.m., and from 4 to 6 p.m. The cuffum prefers the very early morning and late evening, and may be caught on moonlight nights with an artificial white moth. The best rod for both fish is a short salmon-rod, with long tapering salmon-line. There are some

other kinds of fish, which are sometimes caught when trying for nobler game. The warrow, which is a very fair table-fish, and almost as game as a trout, which it resembles in shape, though its blackish colour compares unfavourably with the speckled beauties of our home streams and lakes. This fish rises freely at a red mackerel-fly with most of the white wings cut off, which I imagine they took for the scarlet dragon-fly of the colony, and it was after seeing several of these risen at I tried this lure. They run very evenly just over ½ lb. each, and rise freely in the early morning in perfectly still water, where no lukananni would stir, if the fly was thrown so as to drop lightly under or close to the sedges on the further bank.

The wabri is an inferior fish of a deep, flat shape. It is tolerably game, though it does not leap like the three first-named fish. It is generally caught with bait, but will take a fly. I have taken none over ½ lb.

The sun-fish will take a bright-coloured fly in rather shallow water. A fair fish for the table, and handsome, but not very game when hooked. Weighs from ½ lb. to ¾ lb.

The dog-fish is a savage-looking pike-like fish, beautifully shot with changing colours when fresh out of the water. I have caught a few when fishing for lukananni, and they made a good fight for their size, which was rarely over ½ lb.

When upon a fishing excursion—as fish in the tropics will not keep more than two or three hours—we erect a barbacote and smoke all the fish

that we cannot eat at the time. These smoked fish will keep for a long time, and make excellent soup, or, if soaked in water for a short time, are good fried with butter. There are some excellent fish caught in the rivers of the interior by the Indians with night and spring-lines, and by poisoning the water, such as the haimaira, the pacu, and the low-low—the latter, a huge fish, is sometimes caught from 50 lbs. to 70 lbs. in weight; but these are no use for sporting purposes. A low-low was caught at Christianburg, on the Demerara River, in March, 1886, 9 ft. long, 4 ft. in girth; fins 13 ins. by 10 ins., and width of mouth 18 ins. Cartaback may be caught with a rod and line, if you bait with kneaded bread or paste, and let your bait float on the surface of the water. These fish abound in the Essequibo and Massaruni rivers, and sometimes scale 5 lbs. to 6 lbs.

It is difficult to say when is the best time for fly-fishing. In the middle of the dry season, when the savannahs have drained into the creeks, I have always found to be a good time to fish. When there is too much water the people say, "The fish wa'ak in the savan." Cuffum and lukananni can only be caught in running water; it is no use fishing for them when the water is stagnant. Warrow, sun-fish, and wabri, on the other hand, seem to prefer the still water.

A day's fishing in Demerara would surprise old Isaac Walton and his friend Cotton. No walking by pellucid streams, ruffled by the cool March winds. The angler, tossing in his

hammock, is awakened by the roaring of the red howling baboons, just as the break of dawn reddens the Eastern skies. After a hasty toilet and a cup of steaming coffee, as soon as there is light enough to see his flies, our fisherman sallies out with his rod, to cast his line in the brown waters of the Lama or Maduni. Clad in the lightest garments, his head protected from the sun by a wide felt wide-awake, he is a prey to innumerable mosquitoes and sand-flies, which bite and sting at their pleasure. Before 8 a.m. the fierce horizontal rays of the sun burn his back, arms, and hands, so that they become swollen and scarlet, and, reflected from the water, take the skin off his nose. Still the undaunted sportsman feels indifferent to all these disagreeables if he hooks a cuffum of ten pounds, and sees the sun sparkling on his silver scales as he leaps madly into the air, trying to rid himself of the cruel hook embedded in his jaw, or hears the scream of his reel, and feels with a thrill of excitement the mad rush of a five-pound lukananni boring its way through the brown water.

As in England, fish are capricious. Some days they allow themselves to be caught with ease, at other times they are sulky or off their feed, and refuse the most tempting lure. "Patience and perseverance" is the motto for the angler in Demerara, as elsewhere.

Considerable excitement was caused in London society a year or two ago when it was announced that one of the large snakes at the Zoo had

swallowed one of its companions but little smaller than itself. A similar circumstance happened at the museum in Georgetown in 1887, where a decisive combat took place between a small boa-constrictor and a large yellow-tail snake. The yellow-tail was placed in the cage with the boa, which immediately seized the intruder round the neck and body, in order to constrict it. The yellow-tail objected to this so strenuously that he forced asunder the grasp of the boa, and, seizing it by the head, placed himself outside of his assailant; so the boa paid the penalty of his rashness, and afforded a meal for his opponent. When I saw the yellow-tail a few days afterwards, he seemed quite well-furnished and comfortable.

The left bank of the Essequibo River, for thirty miles before it debouches into the Atlantic Ocean, was, at one time, a garden of fertility; no fewer than forty-two estates were located on its shores. It was called in old times the Aroabisce coast, which has since been corrupted into Arabian, but was commonly known to the populace as Capoey, from a creek of that name in the centre of the district, where the old county jail was situated. In what are called the good old days, the whole coast was under cultivation; and, as each of the forty-two estates had a manager and one or two overseers, there was a lively interchange of hospitalities, and meetings for the purposes of horse-racing and cock-fighting, with the usual accompaniment of innumerable sangarees. There are three or four small lakes a few miles aback of the

BAYERISCHE STAATS-BIBLIOTHEK MUENCHEN

estates, surrounded by low sand-hills. On the banks of these lakes the planters erected small wooden shanties, where they could sling their hammocks, and to which they used to resort from Saturday to Monday, and on public holidays, and pass the time in card-playing, drinking, bathing, and generally cooling out.

A racecourse was laid out near the Capoey Lake, where the planters rode their creole ponies and mules in friendly rivalry.

But emancipation, the fall in the price of sugar, and the great expense attending the employment of East Indian immigrants, led to the ruin of scores of plantations; so, one by one, the beautiful fertile estates on the coast dropped out of cultivation. When I was Sheriff of Essequibo, from 1877 to 1882, there were only thirteen estates in existence which were making sugar; and now these have been reduced to seven, through the amalgamation of two or three estates into one, which, however, by improved cultivation and machinery produce almost as much sugar as the previous thirteen. But although we could only boast of a reduced number of estates, and consequent managers and their subordinates, the coast had not degenerated from its ancient hospitality and desire to make life endurable under a tropical sky. The races on the old Capoey racecourse were revived; monthly dances were given by the leading planters and officials; a small billiard and reading club was started at Zorg; and there was a general freedom of intercourse and pronounced joviality, which

sometimes rather scandalized our more prudish colonists from town.

Practical jokes were not unknown, and dinner-parties often bore a close resemblance to the ancient feasts of the Centaurs and Lapithæ. On one festive occasion, at the house of a leading planter, dinner was only half over when a stalwart Scotch manager mounted on the dining-table, and, dancing a reel, kicked the wine-glasses into the faces of the guests. These naturally retaliated with tumblers and decanters, when the table, suddenly giving way in the centre, precipitated the dancer to the ground, with several of the other guests, and amidst the debris of the dinner, the whole ending in a general scrimmage. I need not say there were no ladies at these feasts.

The same terpsichorean gentleman once harnessed a pair of bullocks to a friend's waggon, instead of his horses; so when his friend left the house on a dark night, under the influence of an excellent dinner and several stirrup cups, he was carried whither he would not, and, despite all his tugging and multiform swearing, was landed in a cattle-shed by his astonished steeds. I am afraid we were rather a wild lot on the coast in those days; and our pastors, whatever we may say about our masters, were, as a rule, of the sign-post order, pointing the way, but not troubling to go themselves.

From these strictures on the clergy, I am glad to be able to exempt two holy and noble men, who blessed the coast with their labours, viz. the

Venerable Dean Austin and the Rev. William Brett, the apostle of the Indians—two men who would have adorned any ministry in any country. The Rev. William Austin, Rural Dean of Essequibo, was cousin to the first Lord Aberdare, and also to the first Bishop of Guiana. He was, when I knew him, a singularly tall, handsome, and benevolent old man, with long grey hair falling to the collar of his coat. He had been rector of St. John's Church in Essequibo for fifty years, during which time he had only once taken a holiday to the old country. He was simple in his habits, and was like a venerable patriarch of the olden time. He belonged to the old evangelical school, and had no sympathy with ritualism or sacerdotalism. It was a pleasant sight to see him standing at the west door of his church on Sunday mornings welcoming all the people that came to church, rich or poor, black or white; and when he saw the church beginning to fill he would look at his watch and say to the old verger, "I think we may begin now, Thomas; bring me my surplice," which he donned, talking pleasantly all the time. The church was, of course, open all round, and as we sat in our pews we could look out into the blazing sunshine, and see the lizards darting over the silent graves, and the kiskadees quarrelling in the mango trees. Three large sand-box trees towered alongside the sacred edifice, in whose welcome shade waggons, buggies, and other traps were grouped, awaiting their owners. During service goats belonging to the neighbours had an unfortunate

habit of invading the church and disturbing our devotions. I remember on one occasion the Venerable Dean was reading the first lesson, when he suddenly stopped and called out, "Thomas, Thomas, why don't you drive that goat out of my waggon; don't you see it is eating the cushions?" and, as Thomas departed on his errand, the lesson was resumed.

There were three medical districts on the coast, and it was a curious fact that out of the medical officers in charge at different times no less than three became insane, and two committed suicide, during the four years of my shrievalty.

Our communication with the rest of the colony was effected by a small paddle-steamer, which left the capital on three days every week at 7 a.m., reaching the coast about noon, and returning the same day. My first visit to the Arabian coast was under rather exciting circumstances.

In October, 1872, a serious riot had taken place on Plantation Devonshire Castle at the extreme north of the coast; a conflict had taken place between the armed police and the East Indian immigrants, in which nine of the latter had been killed and several wounded. A company of the West Indian Regiment had been sent down and quartered on the estate. In consequence of the inquiry which was taking place in Georgetown in December, 1872, I was ordered by the Governor to go down at once and take over the whole district during the absence of the regular magistrates, who were summoned to the inquiry. I received my

orders at 10 p.m., and as the steamer left at 7 a.m. next morning, there was not much time to lose; but I was up to time, and at 7 a.m. we cast off from the stelling, and were soon steaming down the muddy waters of the Demerara River towards the broad Atlantic on my way to the Arabian coast of Essequibo. In those days the steamer stopped at Airey Hall, about two miles from Suddie, where are the Government head-quarters, court house, gaol, barracks, etc.

I was met by the inspector of police for the county, who drove me to Suddie, where I found every one on the alert, sentries posted, and the police armed with Enfield rifles and ball cartridge. After luncheon the inspector and myself drove down the coast. We were both armed with re-volvers, and armed and mounted orderlies trotted on each side of our waggon. I found these pre-cautions irksome and unnecessary, and after the first day of my stay abolished them, and went about unattended and unarmed. At Devonshire Castle, eighteen miles from Suddie, we found a company of the 2nd West Indian Regiment and a large body of police. As the riot was effectually quelled, I had no occasion to call out the men for any service except sentry-go for the protection of the manufactories and public buildings, as the coolies had threatened to burn them down. A schooner was kept riding at anchor off Suddie, so that in case of the general rising, of which we were warned, the white women and children might be placed in safety.

One amusing incident occurred of which I was the victim. As everything seemed quiet and no danger was apprehended, we somewhat relaxed our precautions. I was staying at the Court House in the judge's lodgings, over which a sentry was placed day and night. A password and countersign were daily issued by me, and the sentries were ordered to shoot any one who attempted to pass at night without giving the password.

I had been dining with the sheriff, and was returning to my quarters cheerfully with a cigar in my mouth about 11 p.m., when I was confronted by the black sentry, who, bringing his rifle down to the order, called out, "Who go dere?" I was somewhat startled. I had forgotten the sentry, and, what was worse, I had entirely forgotten the password. I knew that the sentries were picked men, generally Africans, who had served in a West Indian regiment, and who were noted for strict obedience to orders; so I knew if he had been ordered to shoot any one who tried to pass without giving the word, he would do so to a moral. This was pleasant! I attempted to temporize. "Look here, you know me, my good man." "What de word?" shouted the sentry, rattling his arms. That was just what I wanted to know. I heard the man cock his rifle, and knew he would let drive at me in another minute, so I made an undignified stragetic movement to the rear, so as to place the inspector's house betwixt myself and the enemy. Satisfied by this manœuvre that I was a dangerous character, the sentry began

to stalk me round the building, with his gun in both hands ready for action. As soon as I got round the inspector's house, I bolted up the back steps like a lamp-lighter and broke in upon the astonished inspector, who was just turning into bed. At first he thought that another riot had broken out, and was hurrying into his trousers and shouting for his sword, but I stopped him by telling him the absurd dilemma I was in. He roared with laughter, and it was some time before he could recover sufficiently to tell me the password for the day. Armed with this, I looked out cautiously and saw my friend prowling round the house, waiting to have a pot shot at me in case I should bolt. I shouted out the word to him, and, the inspector coming down with me, we satisfied the sentry that I was an honest citizen, and I went up to my quarters. The next morning I sent for the man, who began to express his sorrow for having "troubled me," but I stopped him, telling him he was a first-rate sentry, and gave him five shillings.

The inquiry in Georgetown was at length concluded, and the resident magistrates returned to the coast. The Sheriff of Essequibo at that time was Mr. W. H. Humphreys, a man about sixty-five years of age, who had served the colony well for nearly forty years. He was somewhat eccentric in his manners and conversation. I remember when I went to look him up at Maria's Lodge, where he then lived, to report on my doings during his absence, he met me standing in the gallery: as I mounted the steps, and

before I could grasp his outstretched hand, he said, "Red or white?" "What?" I exclaimed, my wide-opened eyes expressing my surprise. "Red or white?" he repeated, as I grasped his welcoming hand. I was at a loss. Were red and white the colours respectively of Tory and Radical in the county, or were they the mystic symbols of some occult society? "I beg your pardon," I stammered, "but I don't understand." "Will you take red gin or white gin?" And then I knew that the sheriff was upholding the old hospitable custom of the country of meeting the guest on the threshold with a drink, and helping him to depart with a stirrup cup.

I have spoken already of the Rev. William Austin, rector of St. John's. One of his daughters, Miss Anna Austin, has devoted her life to a small mission school at the mouth of the Iturabisce Creek, not far from St. John's Church. Here this exemplary woman has lived for years, surrounded by the gentle Indian people, whose children she has taught to read and sew, whose wives she has protected when the men were away, fishing and wood-cutting. She has been a sort of protecting goddess to these poor people, a small remnant of the once great Arawak tribe. This good lady nurses the sick, advises and guides the whole community, teaches the children, and by her example and precept prevents crime and immorality. Her people are devotedly attached to her, and her sole recompense has been their love and devotion. Miss Austin was no austere religieuse;

she was a jolly, plump lady, with a beaming smile, and always ready for any reasonable amusement. I can recall two or three merry evenings at the mission, when we used to dance in the school-room, the open windows and doors almost blocked up by the faces of the Indian women and children, who were curious to see how the "buckras" enjoyed themselves.

CHAPTER V.

Monotony of life—Trips in the bush—Pomeroon journey—Tappacooma Lake—Aripiàco Creek—Cabacaburi Mission—Mr. and Mrs. Heard —Medora — Bishop Austin — Maccaseema — McClintock — Indian Chief — Im Thurn—Bivouac—Benaboo—Howling baboons—Carib Settlement—Piwarrie—Captain Jeffreys—Indian names—Samboura —Cooking under difficulties — Indian dance — A sunken boat— Anna Regina—Onomatopoetic birds—Supernaam Indian Mission— Sermon—Huis t' Dieren—Boiler explosion—Manslaughter—Coolie Settlement.

I HAVE spoken in another place of the monotony of life in British Guiana. This is sometimes broken by pleasant trips into the bush for shooting and exploring. Visitors to the colony have expressed surprise that more of these trips are not taken by the inhabitants; but we are a busy people, and have some difficulty in getting away from our work, and besides, the truth is, that such trips are very expensive: boats and boatmen have to be hired; all provisions have to be carried with you; hammocks, cooking utensils, etc., provided. Even a short trip of three or four days will cost a party of four twenty-five dollars a-head.

During my sojourn in the colony I enjoyed many excursions into the bush, but as they were more or less alike, I will only give one in detail,

which may be taken as a sample of the rest. In 1880 we went for a jolly trip up the Pomeroon River. Our party consisted of Sir Charles B. Mitchell, now G.C.M.G., and Governor of the Straits Settlements; Charlie Forbes, brother-in-law to Sir Cornelius Kortright, at that time Governor of the colony; W. F. Bridges, a magistrate in Berbice; Wm. Shields, manager of La Belle Alliance, and myself. Our rendezvous was at Shields' place, as he had agreed to lend us a boat and provide paddlers. So one morning at 6 a.m. we found ourselves on the side line dam of La Belle Alliance, with our hammocks and other impedimenta. Here we found a somewhat old tent boat awaiting us, and five black men as paddlers, whose appearance did not impress any of us very favourably. However, we packed our traps in the boat as well as we could, which was not an easy matter. There were five of us, and five of the crew; we all had hammocks to sleep in, a change of clothes in case of getting wet; rugs and blankets for the hammocks, as the early mornings are damp and chilly when one camps out.

We had to carry food for us all for five days, not forgetting drinks; a frying-pan, saucepans, etc., for cooking; besides a couple of guns with cartridges, fishing-rods and sketching materials. However, everything was stowed away at last, and we started up the water-path, which brings fresh water to the estate from the Tappacooma Lake, a sheet of water partly natural, partly

artificial, which supplies the estates of North Essequibo with fresh water. We reached the lock at eleven, where we breakfasted, and starting in an hour we soon crossed the lake, which is about two miles in breadth, stopping at the overflow on the western side. Here we unloaded our boat, and dragging it up and down two ladders constructed for that purpose, we launched it again into the Tappacooma Creek, a small stream which runs down towards the Pomeroon. The creek was very narrow and tortuous, and overhung with dense forest growth, so that in some places it was almost dark, although the sun was high in the heavens; innumerable llianes threatened to destroy our tent, which we had to remove; and it was necessary to keep a sharp look out and have a cutlass handy to prevent ourselves from being dragged out of the boat by the strong bush ropes. Frogs were croaking in all directions, the shrill cry of the cicada echoed through the forest; great metallic sky-blue butterflies flitted lazily through the gloom, as we twisted and turned through the dark brown water. At length the creek grew wider and we debouched into the Aripiàco, a fine stream about two hundred yards wide, and bordered on both sides by dense forests.

Merrily we paddled along; Mitchell seized a paddle and worked away with a will, whilst we all joined in one of the wild creole boat-songs, which always seem to infuse double energy into the paddlers' arms. At the rate we travelled, our day's journey was soon over, and at 5 p.m. we turned

into the broad waters of the Pomeroon, which at its junction with the Aripiàco is a fine river, a quarter of a mile wide. Turning to the left, half an hour's pull brought us to the landing-place of the Cabacaburi Mission, which is placed on a small hill on the right bank of the river. Here we were welcomed by Mr. Heard, the missionary, and carried by him up to his house, where we were most hospitably entertained by Mrs. Heard and her charming daughter, Nellie Townsend.

The mission buildings are, of course, all constructed of wood. The missionary is his own architect, and the whole work has been done by the Indians under his guidance. They consist of a roomy house for the missionary's family, with some outhouses; a pretty little church, a school-room, school-master's house, and a number of Indian benabs, where the inmates of the mission and visitors can sling their hammocks and cook their food. And surely no monarch of the earth had ever a more glorious resting-place than these children of the forest. Their graveyard is a splendid grove of bamboos, which has been so cleared that the great graceful plants form groups of fluted columns, their magnificent fronds meeting overhead from all sides, exactly like the crypt in some mediæval minster.

It was refreshing to meet people who were so thoroughly happy and useful as these good missionaries. One would have expected that ladies, banished into the wilderness, would have taken up their cross, performed their duty with a smile, thinking

their life was a martyrdom for Christ's sake. But with Mrs. Heard and Miss Townsend the mission was a labour of love; they were devoted to the Pomeroon, they loved the river and Cabacaburi; they made friends of the gentle Indians, and taught them, not only to read, write, and spell, but trained them to habits of temperance and chastity; and what was perhaps harder still, attempted to train the boys to regular labour in their fields and gardens.

We slung our hammocks in the schoolroom, and at 7 p.m. sat down to a sumptuous dinner, which Mrs. Heard provided. Creole soup began the feast, followed by many luxuries, amongst which figured the dainty duraquarra and noble powis, and other delicate birds and fishes of the forest and stream. We were waited upon by two charming young Indian maidens with bare feet and ankles, clad in neat print gowns, with their splendid black hair neatly braided and tied with coloured ribbons. One of them had been named Medora at her baptism. She was a pretty girl, with a sweet expression, and a great friend of mine. Once, when our dear old Lord Bishop (Austin) was paying a pastoral visit to Cabacaburi, Medora had been instructed by Mrs. Heard to call the Bishop "My Lord," when she spoke to him. The little maid was anxious to learn and to please, but was somewhat appalled at the six feet three inches of aproned humanity which the good bishop presented to her view; so at dinner, in handing him the mustard, she forgot her lesson in its entirety, and said,

"Please, God, will you have some mustard?" Naturally, this excited much mirth, in which the dear old man joined as freely as any one. I remember a somewhat similar occurrence on the Demerara railway. It was nearly dark, and the bishop was sitting opposite to me in a saloon carriage. As we stopped at Betterverwagting, some rude black women, as their custom then was, thrust their heads in at the windows to criticize the passengers. One of them catching sight of the bishop, who had a very large and striking appearance, exclaimed, "Ow, me Gad! what is dis?" to whom another woman scornfully replied, "What! You no know he! Why, that me Lard Gad de Bishop."

But I am wandering away from Cabacaburi. After our dinner and a cigar, we were ready for our hammocks. Next morning saw us all up at five, when a run down the hill, a plunge into the river, and a cup of steaming hot coffee soon fitted us for another day's work.

The black men from the coast had been very noisy and troublesome, had brought some rum with them, and they demanded so many things, and were so impudent, that we discharged them on the spot, and gave them a corial to take them back home. With Mr. Heard's help, we engaged a crew of Indians, who proved excellent boatmen, and good quiet fellows. We left Cabacaburi about eight, and pulling up the river about two miles we came to Maccaseema, the residence of the magistrate of the district. Here we landed, and

went up a low hill to the house. It was a tumble-down old timber structure in bad repair, surrounded by trees and palms, and looking mouldy and unhealthy. The old magistrate met us on the steps, and welcomed us to his house. McClintock was a cadet of an old family in the north of Ireland, who had come out to Demerara as a planter, but not succeeding in that, and having a perfect mania for bush life, he accepted the office of post-holder and superintendent of rivers and creeks in the Pomeroon River. He was a J.P., and when the superintendents were abolished, he was made special magistrate in the Pomeroon district. There he lived for forty years, isolated from all society and all amusements except, what he enjoyed most, shooting and fishing in the interminable forests of his district. He lived amongst and with the Indians; attached to himself several Indian women, and lived a free and independent life. He was an upright, honest man; a good painstaking magistrate, although his work in that direction was not overwhelming, and despite his long isolation from his compeers, he always retained the manners and habits of a gentleman of birth and education.

At the time we visited him, he was nearly seventy years of age, tall, with long grizzled locks and a matted beard and moustache, which looked as if it seldom saw a comb. After chatting for a short time, McClintock insisted upon our drinking something, and he produced from a corner of his gallery some bottles which looked like grimy old wine-bottles, and which he announced was

some wine which he had bought when he was expecting a visit from his cousin, Admiral Sir Leopold McClintock. In vain we tried to excuse ourselves; he insisted upon our drinking some, and rather than hurt his feelings we consented. He poured out hock and burgundy into tumblers, and presented us with the nectar, which we gulped down like medicine. Imagine our feelings! The wine had stood on an end in a hot gallery for years; the corks were dried up; the wine was hopelessly ullaged, flat as ditch-water, sour as vinegar. We paid our host a hasty adieu, and hurried down the hill to the boat. Not a word was said until we were off, when we exchanged glances, and Shields broke out, "For God's sake, a glass of brandy!" A flask was produced, and we took a good shot all round; but I don't think that glass of wine at Maccaseema will fade from our memories as long as life lasts.

There is a good story told about old McClintock. When his cousin, the admiral, visited British Guiana, his flagship could not come within sixteen miles of the shore, owing to the shallow water. As the *Bellerophon*, with the admiral on board, was lying at anchor off the coast, rolling her yards nearly into the water, the quarter-master of the watch came up to the captain and, touching his cap, said, "Indian chief coming aboard, sir." The captain took his glasses, and sure enough saw a large canoe, propelled by a dozen Indians, approaching the ship; in the stern of the ship sat a tall man in an odd-looking tall hat. The captain

knocked at the admiral's cabin-door and reported, "Indian chief coming aboard, sir." "Very well," said the admiral; "man the gangway to receive Indian chief." But when the canoe came alongside, it was seen that the supposed Indian chief was a white man in a very old-fashioned topper, who, when with some difficulty he climbed up the ladder on to the deck, asked to see his cousin, the admiral. This was McClintock, who, hearing that the flagship was lying out at sea, had ventured in one of his largest canoes to pay her a visit. McClintock retired a year or two after our visit, and his place was given to Mr. Everard im Thurn, an Oxford graduate, and a man of great literary ability and much taste. Im Thurn rebuilt Maccaseema, laid out the grounds with lovely shrubs and palms, loaded the verandah and surrounding trees with orchids, laid out a gravel tennis court, and made the place into a perfect paradise. When I stayed with him, in 1887, I was amazed at the change he had effected in the place in so short a time. But in the forests of Guiana one must live in perpetual watchfulness against damp, insects, and parasitic growth. A few months of neglect will ruin a house and garden; and when Mr. Im Thurn was promoted, and left Maccaseema, a very short time elapsed before it had fallen back into its old state.

We left Maccaseema about ten o'clock, and, pulling up the river, we reached a sand bank about one o'clock, where we bivouacked and breakfasted. Mitchell and Bridges attacked a small dry tree

with their cutlasses to make firewood; but a couple of strokes brought down upon their devoted heads a shower of large black ants, which began biting them ferociously; they yelled and danced about, and at last took headers into the river, as the only way of getting rid of their tormentors. It was impossible to help laughing, although they suffered considerably. After breakfast we started again. The Pomeroon, like most South American rivers, is a dark brown stream rushing down between interminable forests without a single break to vary the monotony. The banks are low and swampy, except when low sand ridges cross the line of the stream. This part of the colony is very thinly inhabited; since leaving Maccaseema we had not seen a human being, nor a single buck hut; so as the Indian boatmen told us that we could not reach any settlement before dark, we prepared to camp out in the bush. About 4.30 we reached a spot that was three feet above the water level, and which seemed dry and airy, so we landed. Selecting four trees, we cleared away the low scrub, and cutting four strong posts, we drove them into the ground, and leaned them against the trees, to which we bound them with strong bush-ropes; two or three poles were then laid across between the ends of the posts and the trees, so forming two strong cross-bars about six feet from the ground.

Our hammocks were all slung side by side from ridge-pole to ridge-pole. We then cut a number of large troolie palm leaves, which grow twenty

feet long, and, sticking the ends into the ground, we leaned them over the ridge-poles as that they met in the middle forming an arch, which made an excellent roof, and would have turned a sharp shower. The inside of the benaboo was strewn with dry palm leaves, the hammocks were slung up, and then all was ready for the night. The whole place was put up in less than an hour, and proved an excellent sleeping-place. Of course, with the exception of Forbes and Shields, we were good bushmen, and Forbes himself had spent several years on a sheep farm in Australia, so we were quite at home in our camp. A large fire was soon blazing; some saucepans were ranged over it, and already gave out symptoms of soup and stew. Two large logs were rolled up as seats, so when our dinner was ready we had a right merry meal, washed down with beer and brandy and water; when dinner was over, innumerable songs and yarns, accompanied by many pipes, led us far into the night. It was calm and warm, a full moon riding in the sky, which was quite luminous, and showed out in strong relief the outline of every leaf over our heads.

At last we turned into our hammocks, and I was dropping off to sleep when I was roused by the most infernal barking and roaring. Attracted by our fire and singing, a troop of howling baboons had come over the trees, and were making night hideous by their yells. Shields, who was not acquainted with the brutes, shook my hammock violently, and whispered, "What on earth is

that?" Being somewhat vexed, I replied, "Tigers." "Are they very near?" "Very," said I, and taking advantage of a lull in the chorus, I dropped asleep. Poor Shields lay awake half the night, expecting to be devoured by wild beasts. He was sleepy and cross in the morning, when Bridges asked him if he had heard the baboons last night. "Oh, those were baboons, were they? What an awful noise they make! But what were they saying?" "I don't know," replied Bridges. "I don't belong to the same species."

We were up before sunrise, and found it cold and damp, the dew falling like rain, so a drop of gin and a hot cup of coffee were served out all round, and we were afloat as the heavens flushed with rosy light at the approach of the god of day. We paddled along all the day, the river being tortuous and much narrower. There was not much life to be seen, except some toucans, galdings, cranes, kingfishers, and humming birds, some of which we shot. We also bagged two ducklers, a kind of duck, but with a somewhat fishy flavour. At five p.m. we reached the first Carib settlement, situated on a sand hill about forty feet high. Here we landed, and received a visit from the Carib chief, who came to welcome us. He was accompanied by about thirty men and women, girls and boys. They are a fine race of Indians, taller and better made than any I had seen in the colony. The young, unmarried ladies were quite naked except for the small square

queyo suspended from their waists; the married ones wore a short petticoat made of fibre, though one or two donned calico petticoats, which no doubt they had got at the mission, as Mrs. Heard would not allow them to land there without a skirt on. One young girl, just budding into womanhood, excited our admiration; she was a perfect figure, like a brown Hebe. We were invited up to the settlement, where we found a number of large, well-built benabs, and about fifty Indians. They had some large fields of cassava, and seemed well nourished and contented. They were preparing for a piwarrie feast, to which we were invited the next evening; so all the old women were sitting round massive bowls chewing roasted cassava bread, and spitting it out into the bowls. It is then mixed with warm water, and soon ferments in the hot sun. To my mind it is a disgusting drink, but the Indians are very fond of it. To see a circle of old wrinkled hags sitting round a cauldron chewing the burnt cassava, the red liquor oozing out of the corners of their mouths, and running down their skinny breasts, as they, one by one, vomit out the contents of their mouths into the bowl, is not an appetizing spectacle. After that, a little piwarrie goes a long way.

The chief gave us two benabs in which to sling our hammocks, so we were soon comfortably settled. This Carib chief, whose Indian name was as long as my arm, was generally known as Captain Jeffreys, and was as arrant an old

scoundrel as ever I met. The bishop, in one of his trips to the Pomeroon, had fallen in with Jeffreys, had baptized him, and subsequently confirmed him, so the old scoundrel used to go to meet the bishop, when visiting Cabacaburi, and take the sacrament with him. He was a fearful nuisance to me during our stay. I had charge of the grog; so first thing in the morning he would come and squat at the foot of my hammock, put his hand on his stomach, groan and say he felt very bad. This was all to get brandy. At last I got tired of this arrangement, so I got a tumbler and filled it with rum, bitters, Worcester sauce, laudanum, and chlorodyne. I told Jeffreys it was good medicine, and he took it off like a man; but he turned up again some hours afterwards, and said he wanted some more of that medicine, it had done him so much good.

It is a curious thing that you can never discover an Indian's real name. It is given him with some solemnity when he is an infant, but he never divulges it, nor is he ever called by it. He is always known by some nickname or name of distinction for his prowess in war, hunting, or fishing.

We passed a quiet night, and next morning, leaving our heavy baggage under the charge of one of our men, we started up the river. The season had been unusually dry for the time of year, so the river was very low. We had paddled about two hours when our progress was stopped by two large trees, which had fallen across the stream and formed, with accumulated sand, a kind

of dam. We were all ordered overboard, and by main force we dragged the old boat over the obstruction. Several times in the next three miles we were obliged to lighten the boat, till at last, beyond a spot called Samboura, we were forced to give up the attempt to proceed any further in our boat, the river being only navigable by Indian woodskins. Samboura is a pretty place; the river here is full of granite rocks and sand banks, the water is beautifully clear, the banks high, and the forest growth dense and varied. We pulled up one little rapid, and, finding we could go no higher, we stopped and played about in the delicious water. We landed at the site of a deserted Indian camp, enjoyed a hearty luncheon, or late breakfast, and tried in vain to catch some lukananni. Setting our faces homewards, we paddled down to our last night's camp, the old boat leaking dreadfully all the way.

When we reached our camp, I set to work to cook our dinner; and finding a large buck pot, a thought of some good creole soup flashed across my mind; so, putting the pot on the fire with a quart of water inside, I put in a tin of meat, some sausages, tin of peas, some plantains and buck yams, with some salt and Worcester sauce, and left it to boil. Unfortunately, my scullery-maid, an Indian boy, seeing an open tin of sardines, thought it was a pity to waste it, so he turned it, oil and all, into the pot. However, the soup, when cooked, was pronounced good, and we enjoyed a hearty dinner.

Afterwards we went up to the Carib settlement, and found the people beginning their piwarrie dance. They were already half drunk, and we saw enough both of their dance and themselves in a very short time.

We turned into our hammocks and slept as well as we could amidst all the noise around us. The Indians fill themselves with piwarrie until they can hold no more, and then discharging it all out, begin afresh. After performing this feat several times, they become quite drunk and stupid. This may seem very savage and disgusting, but I have seen the students of the polished University of Heidelburg do the same thing when drinking beer. About 1 a.m. Mitchell came to my hammock, and, waking me up, told me our boat had filled with water and sunk in the river. This was pleasant, as she was the only link connecting us with civilization; so as early as possible in the morning we were at work, bailed out the boat, drew her on shore, and proceeded to calk her seams with mud and grass; and in this rotten craft we started homeward. After a long day's pull with the stream we reached Cabacaburi Mission about 6 p.m. The boat certainly kept afloat, but we were obliged to bail away all the time. We spent the night at the mission, and the next day returned to the Essequibo coast by the Aripiàco and Tapacooma Lake, down the Anna Regina water-path to the estate of that name, where we were hospitably entertained by the genial manager.

In all countries and languages there are certain

animals and birds which are known by names descriptive of the cries which they utter. British Guiana is no exception to this rule, in fact, the number of birds so familiarly named is somewhat large. Walking through the Botanic Gardens in the evening, cries of "Kill a cow! kill a cow!" are heard from the bush. This is a curious bird, known to the learned as *Aramides cayennensis*. Early in the morning, when you are tumbling out of your hammock near some Indian camp, your ears are assailed by cries of "Han-na-qua! han-a-qua!" the call of a pheasant-like bird, which gives it its name. The greenheart bird (*Lathria cinerea*) acquired its Indian name, pee-pee-yo, from the shrill cry it utters when swinging on a bough of its favourite tree.

The powis, shypook, quaack, and qu'estceque dit, all derive their names from the various sounds which they give forth. The calf-bird, clothed in sober olive, prevents the weary traveller from sleeping, by imitating the bellowings of a cow deprived of its calf; whilst the bell-bird (*Campanero*) in the forest tolls the knell of a lost soul. The splendid hia-hia parrot acquired that name from its utterances as it raises its tartan frill and welcomes the rising sun. The birds known to the creoles by the singular names of "work, work, work to hell" and "wife-sick" certainly give utterance to sounds resembling those words, and are rivalled, but not equalled, by the little songsters known as Tom Pitcher (*Saltator magnus*) and twa-twa. The latter is an aristocratic bird, as he is always

obsequiously followed by an attendant, who is contemptuously called "twa-twa slave," but known to ornithologists as *Oryzoborus torridus*.

But it is the goat-sucker family to which we must look for sounds most nearly approaching human utterances. As in Europe, the whip-poor-will gives out his plaintive note to the still evening air; and it is rather startling to a new-comer to be greeted, as he steps out of his boat on the river's bank, by a pert little bird that exclaims, "Who are you? who are you?" There are two birds of this species (*Nictibius*), known as jumbi birds, whose cries exactly resemble the moaning and sobbing of some woman in great distress; they utter painfully weird cries and shrieks, suggesting sometimes the awful agony and despair of lost souls, to the terror of youngsters and horror of adults.

Another Indian mission, founded by the Church of Scotland, is established on a small sand hill up the Supernaam Creek, which falls into the Essequibo River about twelve miles to the south of Suddie. I paid a visit to this mission in 1880, in company with Doctor and Mrs. Forte and their children, and one of the leading planters on the coast. Mr. Walker, the gentleman in charge of the mission, received us very kindly, and placed his house at our disposal. There was a large wooden church, which could accommodate about three or four hundred people. The next day, which was Sunday, we were preparing to go to church, for which a large number of Indians were assembling, when Mr. Walker came to me, and

asked me if I would say a few words to the congregation, as they would be glad to hear something from their sheriff. I agreed offhand, but was rather dismayed when in church, after he had prayed and read a chapter from the Bible, the good minister descended from his pulpit, came to my pew, and led me up into his place. There was no time to think, so I plunged boldly in *medias res*. Taking my text from the beginning of the Bible, "And God placed man in the Garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it," I expatiated to my attentive hearers on the beauty of labour; that God, in His wisdom, knew that Adam, even in Eden, would not have been happy, had he nothing for his hands to do, and had he been compelled to remain in idleness; drawing the moral, that if idleness would turn even Eden into an abode of unhappiness, how much more would it be so here, where Satan is always finding some mischief for idle hands to do. I pointed out that life was not to be spent in idling in a hammock smoking, with an occasional carouse, but in useful labour, etc., etc.

My planter friend was delighted with the discourse. "Great Scott! Sheriff," he said to me, after church, "that was a grand sermon! How much will you charge for preaching it on my estate every Sunday? I wish my people saw the beauty of labour." The missionary, in his annual report to the parent society in England, naturally mentioned my discourse amongst other occurrences, and I was much amused at the receipt, some months afterwards, of a letter from a religious

female relative in England, who congratulated me on my efforts on behalf of heathen missions, and hoped that the Lord would bless my work.

Between Suddie and Aurora, on the Arabian coast, was a sugar estate, called Huis t' Dieren. When I was appointed Sheriff of Essequibo, the place had gone down very low, and was only making about one hundred and fifty hogsheads of common process sugar; the buildings were in a dilapidated condition, and everything pointed to a rapid descent to ruin; but I was not prepared for the terrible and dramatic exit which it made from the ranks of cultivated estates. One night the Inspector-General of Police, who was paying an official visit to the coast, was dining with me. We sat in the gallery after dinner smoking and yarning till ten o'clock. The General said he must go, as he was tired and sleepy after a hard day's work, so with a final split whisky and soda, he retired, wishing me "Good night." His wishes were not fulfilled. About twenty minutes afterwards, as I was undressing to go to bed, I heard my name called out, and looking out of the window, I saw the serjeant-major from the police barracks, who said the Inspector-General wished me to come over to the barracks, as there had been a dreadful accident at Huis t' Dieren, and he was going there at once. I was soon dressed again, and hurried over to the barracks, where I found the General waiting. We were soon in his waggon, and driving off to the ill-fated estate. Half an hour's drive brought us to the spot, and then we discovered that

a dreadful occurrence had taken place. A large boiler used in the sugar works had exploded. The whole top of the boiler, a mass of iron weighing two tons, had been hurled through the trees for a hundred and fifty yards, and all the steam and boiling water had been shot out upon the unfortunate negresses, who had been carrying megass near the boiler, a large number of whom were scalded by the water and steam, seven of them so severely as to necessitate their immediate removal to a house which was extemporized into a hospital. Three of the women were so much injured that they died almost immediately, and so were saved from much dreadful suffering; two more lingered on for some time in torments, before death put an end to their sufferings; the other injured people recovered.

It was an awful sight to see the poor people; in some of the worst cases the black skin had been almost entirely scalded off, leaving the flesh bright red, and the wool had come off their heads. Others were in patches of black and red, as if afflicted by some dreadful kind of leprosy.

The medical officer of the district did all in his power for the poor people, but that was not much. After making the necessary arrangements for the coroner's inquest, and for the custody of the bodies, the Inspector-General and myself drove sadly back, and were not in bed till two a.m.

At the inquest it was proved that the old boiler was unfit to stand more than a limited pressure of steam; but the ignorant engineer had placed on

the governor, which regulates the safety valve, weights belonging to another boiler, which would have required more than twice the force to have blown out than the boiler itself was calculated to sustain. No wonder that the boiler exploded; it is strange it lasted so long. The jury, by my direction, found a verdict of manslaughter against the engineer in charge of the works, and I issued a warrant for his arrest.

This accident, or rather wilful negligence, gave the *coup de grâce* to the estate, which went out of cultivation, and was soon afterwards purchased by the Government for a coolie settlement, where grants of land were made to East Indian immigrants in lieu of the back passage to India to which they are entitled. A number of the immigrants settled there; and soon a small Hindoo temple reared its head near the spot where the catastrophe occurred, and bright-eyed Indian children play on the top of the boiler, which lies imbedded in the ground only a yard or two from the public road.

CHAPTER VI.

Ikarakka Lake—Capoey racecourse—Riding catastrophe—marooning—Ituribisce Creek—Indian settlements—Flights of butterflies—Arawak Indians—Duffryn mission—Manatee Island—Dauntless bank—Manatees at the Aquarium and the Zoo—Bartica, Essequibo River—Gold discovery—Rev. William Pierce—Railways—Christian mission—Rev. Thomas Youd—Church—Situation for a future city—Mechanics under indenture—Peter McPherson—His death—Better success—Africans—Congo language—Thick skins—Jubilee at Hampton Court—Fire-work display.

About four or five miles inland from the Aroabisce coast stretches a cordon of small lakes formed by creeks, which spread over the savannahs; in the wet season of considerable extent, but in the dry reduced to sheets of water from one to three miles square. The most southerly one was the Ikarakka Lake, formed by the Ituribisce, Mashaboo, and other small streams. The Tappacooma was the most northerly, and between them were the Capoey and Reliance lakes. Near the Capoey Lake was the old racecourse, where in the prosperous days of the colony horse-racing was carried on with much success. In my time, we revived the race meeting, cleaned and repaired the old course, and enjoyed some good sport there. When we were repairing the course, we had some pleasant rides

aback from Plantation L'Union. Dawson, the manager of that estate; Low, of Aurora, and myself, often rode round in the cool mornings to see how the work was progressing. After leaving the estate, we rode up a steep but low sand reef, and then a path, a mile long through low bush, led on to the sandy savannah on which the racecourse was situated.

Returning home one morning, in the exuberance of our spirits we raced round the course, and dashed into the bush at a dangerous speed, as the path was not straight, and the branches of the trees in places crossed the path. Low was leading on a great mule; I followed, riding Mark Twain, a well-known racer. Excited by the gallop, the brute became unmanageable, I couldn't hold him, and it was as much as I could do to keep my seat and prevent myself from being swept off by the branches. As we neared the steep slope leading down to the estate, I heard Low shouting out, "Hold hard, Sheriff!" but I was powerless. On dashed Mark Twain, and with a tremendous shock, collided with Low and his mule, who went down before us like ninepins. I reeled in my saddle, but before I recovered myself I was down the slope and careering along the side line dam of L'Union. Dawson was splitting his sides with laughter; Low's language was sulphurous, and it was fortunate for me that I was far away from him when he remounted his mule.

The other lakes were favourite resorts for picnics; and many happy days have we spent

there fishing, sketching, and bathing: marooning in the roughest way, doing our own cooking and washing up. There is good camping-ground by the Ikarakka Lake, and as that was easiest of access from Suddie, it was the favourite resort. There were two routes to it; you could walk aback for about five or six miles, through bush and swamp, or else you could proceed up the creek in a batteau, which is much the most comfortable way, especially if ladies are of the party. The Ituribisce Creek is very tortuous: the lower part is lined by the common swamp grass, mocco-mocco, bundurie pimpler, and dwarf-palms; but after an hour's paddling the character of the banks change, and a forest growth of wallaba, mora, and arrisaroo replaces the uninteresting swamp growth. Splendid groups of manicole and cokerite palms at times meet the eye, whilst various ferns, orchids, and climbing plants attract attention. The animal life is not numerous, a few sakawinki monkeys and groups of the tiny mouse-coloured long-nosed bats are met with. Perched on some high dead branch, the great-billed buzzard or the leaden-headed falcon kite may startle the air with its shrill, harsh cry; flocks of parrots, macaws, or paroquets, may pass overhead; the mournful cry of the trogon or the plaintive cooing of the wood dove may be heard, mingled with the varied notes of the mocking bird and the taps of the woodpecker. The humming birds are numerous and beautiful. The curator of our local museum procured specimens of nine or ten species, including

the grand king humming bird (*Pyrasa pella*), the sabre wing, greenlet, golden throat, the hermit, ruby, and topaz, the blue-chinned sapphire, and the mango. Flapping along lazily on the wing, the magnificent blue and blue-barred morpho butterflies are seen, at some seasons in great numbers; whilst occasionally other species, such as swallow-tails, heliconias, uranias, and yellows, dart along before the boat, or pass it into the forest. All around the piercing shrill sound of the cicadas may be heard; whilst with a droning flight the great wood-boring bees visit flower after flower in search of their nectar. When attacking flowers, which their great size prevents them from entering, these bees bore a hole in the base of the flower, and extract the honey through that aperture.

Gradually the size of the trees diminishes as we approach the open savannah. Along the margin of the lake the great eeta palms grow in clumps, forming small island groups; on the sandy elevations which slope gently down to the water, the little settlements of the Arawak Indians are situated, their benabs surrounded by coconuts, guavas, and cashews. The awarra palm abounds, rendered remarkable by its bunches of golden yellow fruit, which also overspreads the ground and affords fine food to the accourie, labba, and armadillo. Pine apples abound and grow in wild luxuriance. The fishing and shooting about the lake is not good; there are too many Indians; and you may take it as a broad rule in British Guiana,

that many Indians means little game, and *vice versâ.*

One of the most curious sights I ever saw in the colony was a flight of butterflies which passed my house in Suddie. They were the common white and yellow kind, but a column of them, which darkened the sky in its flight, was passing my house for two days without intermission. The insects were flying swiftly, and were not more than two yards apart. The stream was more than a mile wide, for I walked for that distance across them, and how high they reached of course I could not tell. Whether they flew at night I cannot say. It would be impossible to calculate their numbers, and whence they came and whither they were going was equally unknown. The Indians say such flights are a sign of coming droughts. Once in a local steamer, as we were crossing from Leguan to Wakenaam, we passed through a similar column of the lovely green and black velvet swallow-tail butterfly.

There were a number of Arawak Indians still living on the banks of the Ituribisce and Mashaboo Creeks, and during my stay on the coast I paid them many visits, and knew many of them intimately. They were a very quiet, shy people, and always kept out of the way of strangers. They were all under the care of Miss Austin, and periodically visited her mission, and always went there for advice and assistance in their troubles, mental and physical. Besides the creeks mentioned, Dean Austin had obtained for the Indians

permission from the Government to fish and hunt on Manatee Island, a small island in the Essequibo River opposite Suddie, which has, however, for some years been united to the adjacent Tiger Island. It is most curious to see how, owing to the strong tides and currents, land is destroyed and created in the great rivers of the colony. To the north-east of Leguan there is now a large island, called the Dauntless Bank, two miles long, covered with trees, which had no existence when I went to the colony in 1872. Another island is rapidly forming to the south of Tiger Island, where a few years ago was deep water. In other places whole estates have been taken over by the sea, and the surf now breaks with a deafening roar over a beach that was once cane fields, the old buildings and houses lying buried beneath the waves.

Talking of Manatee Island reminds me that, in 1878, two Indians brought me a young manatee for sale, which they had caught off the island, and wanted ten dollars for it. I refused to buy, but advised them to send it to town. They did so, and it was purchased by the captain of a Glasgow direct steamer, who took it home in a turtle tank. It was bought by the Westminster Aquarium for £200, and, when I visited London and the Aquarium a few months afterwards, I was asked to pay an extra shilling to see the mermaid from South America, the same poor brute which I had refused to purchase for ten dollars a short time before.



VIEW ON THE ESSEQUIBO RIVER, BRITISH GUIANA.

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In September, in 1875, I was in the Zoo in Regent's Park, and saw an unfortunate manatee in the seal-pond. The temperature was then cold, falling to the forties at night; and I told the man, who was feeding it with lettuce leaves, that it would never live in that temperature, as it came from a country where the water was never colder than seventy-eight degrees. I was not surprised, two days afterwards, to see "Death of the Manatee" at the head of a paragraph in a morning journal.

Since the gold industry was started, it has been found necessary to establish a town at the little settlement of Bartica on the Essequibo River, and an ordinance for that purpose was passed in 1887. When the first rumours of gold having been found in the Cuyuni were succeeded, after many years, by the actual discovery of gold in paying quantities in the Essequibo; when the Puruni was found to be a mine of wealth, and the Potaro, with its neighbouring creeks, was described as a very Pactolus, then it was found necessary to establish some central depôt from whence the gold industry could be regulated—a place where labourers could be registered when going up to work, and searched when coming down; where boats could be inspected and licensed, and competent boat hands hired; where the magistrates could adjudicate upon the gold disputes, and the Government officers could issue prospecting and other licenses; where a hospital for the sick could be established, and a lock-up for the disorderly; where the dead could be buried,

and the living entertained; so Bartica was chosen and founded, and is now able to meet all the requirements detailed above.

A glance at the map of Guiana will convince the most sceptical what a wise choice has been made. The gold area seems to be very widely distributed; but there is no doubt that the bulk of it is embraced by that wide stretch of the colony which is drained by the Essequibo, Cuyuni, and Massaruni rivers and their tributaries; so that all the traffic to and from these auriferous districts will be by means of these rivers, or by railways or roads constructed on their banks. The three rivers converge at Bartica, and the vast flood of their united waters is borne on the bosom of the Essequibo, past her hundred isles, into the great basin of the Atlantic.

It is true that gold has been found in the Barima and Barama rivers, and also in the Upper Demerara; but Georgetown can supply all the wants of the latter district, whilst a suitable place in the north-west has been found for a central station.

Some of the greatest cities of old and modern times owe their rise and grandeur to their positions in the fork between two great rivers, which gave them unrivalled advantages for defence and commerce. Lyons and St. Louis are two of the most striking modern examples, and there is no reason to doubt that, in years to come, Bartica will rival those great centres of trade and civilization. [Since writing the above, a railway has been made



ON THE POTARO RIVER, BRITISH GUIANA.

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from the Demerara River to the Essequibo, forming a quicker and more direct route to the Upper Essequibo and Potaro rivers, so the importance of Bartica will be diminished.]

As the visitor passes up the avenue leading to the church at Bartica, he will see an unpretentious monument on his left hand, erected to the memory of the Rev. Wm. Pierce and his family, who all, except one little boy, who was saved by an Indian, perished some years ago in the rapids of the Essequibo, giving a mute, but solemn, warning to all who would seek to penetrate into the wilds in search of wealth—a sermon in stone not to be disregarded. All the three great rivers which centre at Bartica are sown with rapids, whose rocks, like the dragons which guarded the fabled gardens of the Hesperides, are ready to tear in pieces the rash intruder who attempts to grasp the golden fruit. In these dangerous passes many a life has fallen victim to the lust for gold; many a promising venture has been wrecked ere it came near its basis of operations. It would seem sometimes as if the old Indian legends were true, and these rushing waters were peopled by water-mammas and other water-spirits, which dragged down into their horrid depths all those who attempt to pass them without due propitiation. Several suggestions have been made to avoid this loss of life and goods, the most reasonable of which seems to me to build a light, narrow-gauge railway from Bartica, up the left bank of the Essequibo, until the rapids

are past, when there would be smooth water up to the Potaro and other gold-bearing rivers and creeks. This railway would open up a district full of valuable timber, and would be available for the timber-cutters as well as for the gold-diggers. If the first railway were a success, a branch could be run up the right bank of the Massaruni, past Calacoon, skirting the Marechal Falls, up to the Puruni gold-fields; and, if our neighbours in Venezuela will lay aside the sword and take to the pickaxe and shovel, might be connected with a line from the Yuruari Valley, and bring the wealth of that great district through the channels of the Essequibo to the port of Georgetown.

Perhaps the Venezuelans have already abandoned warfare for agricultural pursuits, for Mr. McTurk tells us that he saw five Venezuelan generals working as labourers, and a field-marshal looking after his master's asses, in which occupation, like Saul the son of Kish, he may find a kingdom. I paid a visit to Bartica in 1891. Its situation, as I have said, is admirable enough, though the land near the river is rather low, and requires drainage, as the high spring tides swamp the lowest lots; but as the town extends inland the ground gradually rises, until elevated sites are reached upon which will be reared the houses of our future merchants. The limits of the present town are confined, the whole area laid out being only half a square mile, but it can be expanded on three sides to meet the necessities of trade and

population. Bartica can boast of two or three decent hotels, an extensive market—at my visit destitute of things marketable, unless about fifty black men in hammocks could be reckoned in that category—a dispensary, several good stores, and—perhaps unnecessary to add—thriving rum shops. There seems an absence of the female element, except of a certain class, and few children or fowls; but these defects will be easily remedied. The hospital is a large, roomy edifice, and a broad draining-trench has been dug round the future city. A new police-station near the present stelling has been erected, which adds to the appearance of the town and the comfort of the force.

Bartica, or "red earth"—probably the same red earth from which, according to the Talmud, man was first created—was originally granted for religious uses. It was one of the earliest missionary settlements in the colony under British rule. The original site was about a mile to the west of the Grove, where a grant of land was obtained from Sir Benjamin D'Urban. The mission was removed to its present position in 1837, when a grant of five hundred and sixty acres was obtained from the Crown. Under the fostering care of the Rev. Thomas Youd, the mission obtained a certain amount of success. It was visited by Bishop Coleridge, of Barbados, in 1838, and a church was built dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the evangelist of the desert, and consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Guiana on the

5th of January, 1843, in the presence of Governor Light and a distinguished company.

I doubt whether in any part of the world can be found such an unrivalled site for a city as Bartica presents. Washed on two sides by the waters of two great rivers, she faces the Atlantic breeze, tempered by a passage of thirty miles over a hundred isles clothed in tropical verdure. To the north stretches a mass of fresh water fed by the Massaruni, Essequibo, Cuyuni, and their myriad tributary streams, so as to make a great inland lake, dotted in all directions with islands, varying in size from huge Hog Island, nearly as large as Barbados, to the lovely little Sail Rock, smallest of small islets, but said to be the most densely populated in the world, for on its solitary tree hangs a huge nest of ants. To the south stretch two thousand miles of almost virgin forest and savannah, intersected by ranges of hills, and deep rivers broken by many a thundering fall and noisy rapid; forests, rich in greenheart, mora, ballata, and odoriferous gums; savannahs, which will support cattle by thousands; hills, rich in gold, which for myriads of years have been awaiting the pick of the miner; rivers whose banks are gleaming with golden showers, richer than those which deceived Danaë of old. Seen even now in the early morn bathed in sunshine, more golden than her dreams, she seems a fairy village; all sordid details are effaced, all common objects are transfigured, and nothing but beauty in colour and form remains. The mangoes, with their varied

tints of green and russet; the towering royal palms; the coconuts, with fronds of every shade from gamboge to burnt sienna; the warm, grey houses, with roofs of purple wallaba not yet toned down to drab; the numerous little stellings, each a focus for flashing rays of living water; a score of boats sleeping on the waters; the living crowds of every colour of skin and dress; the brown, nude boys and girls bathing on the strand, their lithe wet bodies glowing with saffron tints under the solar rays; above all, a sky of scintillating blue reflected in a magic mirror of placid water;—all these combined to form a picture of beauty which, once seen, will never be forgotten.

In olden days, after the abolition of slavery, it was customary to introduce mechanics from Great Britain, who, in return for a free passage and regular employment, were indentured for five years to the estate whose proprietors brought them out. When the indentures had expired they generally continued to work on the plantation, and acquired some wealth, which they invested in real property, and became useful and independent colonists. One of these men was Peter McPherson, of Perth and Dunkeld. He was a wheelwright, and, by the exercise of his trade, had made some money, which enabled him to purchase the abandoned estate on which he resided. When I knew him he was an old man, nearly as old as his house, which was a somewhat rickety structure. Raised on ten-foot pillars, the two-storied manager's house was at one time a decent

and commodious building; but it had fallen into grievous disrepair—the floors were full of gaps, where the boards had fallen through, and the gaps had to be crossed by planks. Between the pillars were stored numbers of old cart and waggon wheels, and broken bodies of traps, which afforded convenient roosting-places for numerous fowls, whilst goats, sheep, cattle and horses congregated under the building, the effluvium from these animals rising up into the house through the broken flooring.

Peter was a canny Scot, and not given to wasteful ways; he was, however, rather too fond of grog, and once a year he went "on the bust." He used to saddle his old grey pony, and start off up the coast, calling upon every manager on his way. He had a carouse at each house, where, if his host were friendly, he would spend the night; but often as not he was seen lying asleep by the road-side, whilst the steady old pony cropped the grass beside him. In this way he journeyed up the coast as far as Spring Garden, and then, turning his pony's head, would work his way back again in the same manner. These expeditions lasted about three weeks; and when he reached his home he unsaddled his pony, turning her out to graze, and settled down until his wanderjahr came upon him again. In his latter days he became rather silly, and got the impression that a niece who lived with him was trying to poison him. He sent for Mr. R. G. Duncan, who had known Peter years before, and told him that he

was dying, and that his niece was killing him; and despite Mr. Duncan's attempts to soothe him, the old man was not to be persuaded. His mind began to ramble, and his thoughts went back to the rocks and streams of his native land, and he recited, with tears rolling down his withered cheeks, those touching lines of Burns—

"Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair,
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care.
Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling bird
That wantons through the flowering thorn;
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed—never to return."

The heat and stress of tropic toil, his many years of exile were forgotten, he was back in his own beloved Scotland, and with the words of her greatest poet on his lips the old man sank back and died.

Perth and Dunkeld, where McPherson lived and died, is on the north end of the Aroabisce coast, facing the Atlantic. About five miles beyond was Better Success, the last place on the coast, as it trends round towards the Pomeroon, and the extremity of my district as sheriff.

Better Success was an old, abandoned estate, where lived a number of Africans in a state of primitive barbarism. The front dams of the estate had been broken down by the sea, and the tide swept in and out, under and around, the houses of the inhabitants, which were built on greenheart piles; the road was washed away, and the only means of approach was in bateaux. I once went to

this place to open an inquest over a man, who was supposed to have been murdered. I was astonished to see such numbers of fine stalwart people. Their food was principally fish and rice; the former caught in great numbers out of the sea, the latter grown by coolies on a neighbouring settlement.

As the tide was up, the people were wading through the water in all directions, most of them without clothes; only the older women seemed to think it was necessary to cover their nakedness in any way, although a few of the men sported a ragged pair of trousers or an old shirt. There are several settlements of these Africans in various parts of the colony. They are a fine, hardy race, hard working and prosperous, very different from the ordinary Creole black man. They are the descendants of thirteen thousand Congos, Mandingoes, and other tribes, who were taken out of captured slavers and landed in the country, where they readily found employment. The language these people talk is very peculiar, and perfectly unintelligible to a stranger. Mr. Michael McTurk, special magistrate, has made himself quite familiar with their peculiar tongue. Under the *nom de plume* of "Quow" he has published some amusing anecdotes in the Congo lingo. Witnesses of this race are a puzzle to judges and the despair of barristers.

Some of these Congos have remarkably thick skins, and are real pachyderms. When I was presiding over the Supreme Criminal Court at Suddie, a woman named Sarah Archer, a

Barbadian, was indicted for feloniously wounding a man named Nurse. After some quarrelling, the two had caught hold of one another and fallen to the ground, when the woman, drawing a razor out of her pocket and opening it with her teeth, slashed the man over the face and hands and neck, inflicting several serious wounds. Nurse, who was a Congo man, was taken to the hospital, where his wounds were stitched up by Dr. Castor, the medical officer of the district. At the trial, Dr. Castor, in his evidence, stated that he had never known any man with such a thick skin; he broke two medical needles in trying to pierce it to put in the stitches, and at last was driven to use a bradawl.

During the Jubilee celebration, in 1887, the proprietors of Plantation Hampton Court, on the Essequibo coast, determined to give their employés a treat, and ordered a large supply of fireworks from England for their amusement. On the night selected for the display, fifteen hundred East Indian immigrants, reinforced by large numbers of creoles from the neighbouring villages, assembled in a field in front of the manager's house. I had been invited, as sheriff of the county, to see the display, and assist in the discharge; so, after an early dinner at 6.30, we sallied out about eight, and piling all the fireworks on a mule cart, drove it down to the field. The manager, the head overseer, Dawson, manager of L'Union, and myself, were in charge. The cart was put in position, the mule and cart man

sent away, and we commenced operations. After the discharge of a few preliminary mines and rockets, Dawson went to the cart for a fresh supply, and as he was exploring its recesses, a lighted port fire which he held in his hand fell down into the midst of the fireworks. When he saw what had happened, and surmising what would soon happen, he shouted an alarm to us, and seizing hold of the manager, they both lay down on their faces in a dry trench a few yards off. The head overseer and myself ran for our lives and got behind a big ceiba tree; and then began a display of fireworks, which lasted about ten minutes, worthy of the Crystal Palace; mines exploded, rockets shot about in all directions, catharine-wheels gyrated in the most eccentric manner; fixed pieces were wandering about the pasture, hissing and fizzing; jacks-in-the-box exploded one after another in friendly rivalry; Roman candles kept up a fusillade of coloured balls, a perfect bombardment. With pallid faces, lit up with lights of all colours, we shrank behind our friendly tree, expecting every minute to be impaled by some wandering rocket.

As for the spectators, they were in a frenzy of delight; they had never seen such a tomasha before. They danced, and shouted, and yelled, and rolled on the ground in their excitement. Fortunately, the display was too good to last long; soon all the brilliancy departed, and we were left in darkness, smoke, and a foul smell, but, happily, safe in wind and limb.

CHAPTER VII.

Bovianders—Aboriginal Indians—Indian women—Waterton—G. A. S.—Piwarrie—Character of Indians—Kanaima—Murder of Simon the Arawak's wife—Indian impassivity—Impatience of confinement—Doctrine of clothes—Old customs—Floating shops—Smuggling—Akyma—Bremner family—Old graves—A tomb in the wilderness—Alaric Watts—Sebacabra—Fishing—Old woodskin—Dances—Christianburgh—Paterson—Dalgin—Sergeant Alleyne—Surgical operations—Mora—Sergeant Blunt—Brittlebank—Miscegenation—Napier's Peninsular War—Kroomen—Joe—Arecuna Indians—Maroons.

Amongst the numerous interesting races, pure or half caste, which inhabit British Guiana, must be reckoned the Bovianders, who live up the numerous rivers of the colony, and who are the descendants of the old Dutch settlers by Indian squaws. In no place in the world have native Indians been better treated than in British Guiana. By the Dutch and the English equally they have been protected both as to their persons and property; so that though two hundred years or more have passed since the country was first settled by Europeans, the Indians still exist in considerable numbers, and in close propinquity to the settlements.

It is not my intention to give a history of the

various Indian tribes, or to describe their habits; the curious in such matters can refer to the works of Im Thurn, Brett, and Barrington Brown, who have fully treated this interesting subject. In slavery times both the Dutch and the English Governments subsidized the Indians, or bucks, as they are locally called; and in return the natives used to track and capture all the runaway slaves or convicts who had escaped into the vast forests, which stretched for two thousand miles to the south of the colony. The Indians were never ill-treated, and enjoy some advantages denied to the colonists. The Indian pays no tax of any kind; his dog and his gun, his cassava field, his village of palm-thatched huts provide no revenue for the State. He is allowed to cut timber and bush on Crown lands without license or payment of royalty. When he visits the capital, a special landing-place is provided for him, near to which is erected a commodious shed, where he can sling his hammock. It was no uncommon thing to meet in the busiest and most thronged street in Georgetown a party of Indians devoid of clothes, with the exception of the smallest of aprons, walking unconcernedly along—the women with naked babies slung on their backs, the men carrying live parrots and macaws on their shoulders for sale or bargain. The wife of one of our governors was much scandalized at meeting one of these parties, when she was shopping in Water Street; so she persuaded her husband to issue an order that all Indian women landing in the town should be presented

with a petticoat each; so for a short time each bewildered buckeen was presented with a short flannel petticoat on her arrival in town. Not knowing the use of this modest article of apparel, she generally tied it round her neck, and proceeded to the nearest grog-shop, where she exchanged it for a bottle of rum, and walked about as before naked and not ashamed.

The Indian women make very good wives, hard-working and virtuous, so, as they are not uncomely when young, it is not surprising that many of the early settlers took Indian girls as wives or housekeepers; and the Bovianders I mentioned are the descendants of these alliances. Sometimes men in the higher ranks of life intermarried with Indian women, and such an alliance was not looked upon by society with the same disfavour which, at all times, had been associated with any connection with the negro population.

The great Waterton's wife was the daughter of Captain Edmundstone and an Arawak girl, the daughter of a chief of that tribe; George Augustus Sala, who was born in Demerara, used to boast that his mother was the daughter of an Indian chief; and there is more than one family of position in the colony now, who show unmistakable signs of Indian descent.

When I was in charge of the Upper Demerara River, I was brought into intimate contact with the Indians of the Arawak, Accawoio, and Macusi tribes, and always found them very quiet, well behaved people, except when under the influence

of their native drink, piwarrie, when they became beastly and quarrelsome. Piwarrie is an intoxicating drink, made in a particularly nasty way, which I have already described in a previous chapter.

For some days after a debauch the men are of no use, but lie in their hammocks in a state of stupor. Too much indulgence in piwarrie produces a disease of the rectum, which is peculiar to these Indians. The Indian is not a very amiable character; he is essentially selfish, grasping, improvident, and lazy. Like other aboriginal tribes, he is capable of great endurance both in working and in abstinence from food. He is sullen and revengeful, but not hasty in temper; and he is a fairly good husband and father, though, of course, he treats his wives as slaves, and makes them do all the hard work in the field, as well as in the benab. On the whole, the Indian is a very inoffensive person to his neighbours, and although not a productive citizen, he is an inexpensive one, as he gives but little trouble to the police or the magistrates. The only time when Indians come seriously into conflict with the authorities is when they carry out their native custom of the kanaima, or the avenging of blood.

The Indian kanaima is like the Corsican vendetta; the executioner is selected by lot from the family of the slain, and he indefatigably follows his victim, like a stoat following a hare, until he meets and kills him. One Indian, against whom a kanaima had been preached, was followed for

two years by his executioner, who at last met him and killed him in front of the Government Buildings in Georgetown.

An interesting and curious case of kanaima came under my own knowledge, when I was Sheriff of Essequibo, the particulars of which I think are worth narrating. On the left bank of the Aripiàco, which pours its tributary waters into the Pomeroon River, just below the lovely Indian mission of Cabacaburi, stood the house of Robert Simon, an Arawak Indian. It was built in the usual Indian fashion, about fifty yards from the bank of the river, and consisted of a roof of troolie palm leaves, supported on poles and rafters of wallaba and cedar wood. The eaves of the roof projected about three feet on all sides to keep out the glare of the sun and the beating rain, as there were no walls to the building. Three or four dirty hammocks, made of the fibre of the eeta palm, were suspended from the cross poles; a small fire smouldered at one end of the benab, near to which were some rude implements of cookery, calabashes, gourds, a matapie, sieve, an iron pot, and a great earthenware jar full of water.

Slung along the rafters were some long arrows and short spears, and a rusty single-barrelled percussion gun was leaning against a corner post. There was a small clearing round the house, beyond which was an apparently impenetrable forest of that rich tropical growth peculiar to the equatorial zone.

Simon was, as I have said, an Arawak Indian, one of that great tribe which was at one time so

formidable to the earlier invaders of Guiana, but now only a remnant—about two thousand quiet, peaceable souls, who spend their time in fishing, hunting, and wood-cutting. Some years before the occurrences I am about to mention, Simon had married an Arawak girl, daughter of an Indian who lived at Maccaseema, the residence of the magistrate, Mr. McClintock. Simon's wife led the usual hard life of the Indian squaw, expected to be always at work, to weed the cassava field, to bring the roots from the field to the house, a distance of more than two miles, in a heavy quaick suspended by a band from her forehead; to rub the roots on the grater till reduced to powder, then to squeeze out the deadly juice in the matapie; and, finally, to grind the hunks of pressed cassava into flour, and bake the cassava cakes over the fire. She had to carry all the loads, to nurse the babies, to keep the fire alight all night; in fact, to be her husband's slave. But as this is the common lot of Indian squaws, Simon's gentle wife would have thought herself no worse off than other women if it had not been that Simon, for some reason or other, ill-treated her after the birth of their third child. The woman became sick she did not recover quickly from her confinement. Most Indian women when their babies are born carry them to the river and wash them, and, after washing themselves, go on with their work as if nothing had happened. The happy husband, on the other hand, lies in his hammock for several days, and receives the congratulations of his friends.

Simon's wife, being sickly, could not perform her usual laborious tasks, so her husband first abused her, and then beat her. Driven to desperation by his ill-treatment, she complained of him to her father and brothers at Maccaseema, and they came over to the Aripiàco and remonstrated with Simon. But he was sulky and took their interference with a bad grace; in fact, told them to mind their own business. The ill-usage went on, nay, was intensified by the interference of her brothers, kindly meant, but unwise, as such proceedings usually are. Simon got sulkier, and his temper was not improved by some bad rum, which he now imbibed on Saturdays, and which generally gave him a splitting headache for a day or two afterwards. One day in a fit of rage and drunkenness he gave his unfortunate wife a kick in the stomach (she was again advanced in pregnancy), which felled her to the ground, and brought on violent sickness and fainting. She took to her hammock and died about two days afterwards. Simon reported her death to the good missionary at Cabacaburi, who came to the Indian hut and read the burial service over the poor woman as she was laid in her final resting-place beneath the bamboos of the forest.

Meanwhile the fact of her death reached the ears of her father and brothers at Maccaseema, and rumours of cruelty and violence accompanied it. From what they heard they made up their minds, and without reason, that Simon had killed their daughter and sister, and by the Indian law his life must pay the debt of murder.

About a week after his wife's funeral Simon was sitting on his hammock in his benab mending a fishing-line. It was about eleven o'clock, when few Indians do any work. He had visited his night lines in the river during the early morn; some fish caught by him were already in the pepper-pot simmering over the fire. His three little children, entirely naked, were rolling about in the sand with all the chaste indecency of childhood, playing with each other and teasing a sakawinki monkey, which was tied by a cord round its waist to one of the uprights of the benab. A warracabra or trumpet bird was hopping about, and pecking at the ears of a mangy-looking, half-starved cur, who was taking a bellyful of sunshine, as he had little else to fill his inside.

The whole scene was quivering in a golden haze caused by the intense heat. A woodskin canoe drew up to Simon's landing, out of which stepped four men, the father and three brothers of Simon's wife, and having fastened the woodskin to a tree with a piece of lliane, they marched in single file up to the benab, where they saw Simon sitting inside on his hammock; so they passed him and sat down in a row on a fallen tree, which lay in the shade a little way from the benab.

Two of the men carried guns, the single-barrelled Birmingham guns which are usually sold to native tribes; the other two had their bows with arrows whose heads were dipped in the deadly wourali poison.

Not a word was spoken. The children stopped in their play, and, with instinctive fear, ran and hid in the dense bush. Simon, after a glance at the men, went on with his mending. The four men sat on the log and gazed on the ground. Not a sound was heard except the hum of innumerable insects, the distant boom of the bull frog, and the shrill chattering of the captive monkey. At length Simon, tired of waiting, got up, and, taking his pepper-pot off the fire, began to eat, dipping the cassava cake into the pot. His appetite was not good, which is not surprising under the circumstances, so he soon completed his meal. As he replaced the pepper-pot he cast a hasty glance around, and seeing his gun in a corner, took it up, and rapidly slinging a piece of bamboo containing powder, shot, and caps round his neck, he hoped to slip out at the end of the benab, and, by a rapid dive into the bush, which was quite familiar to him, escape from the men who were watching him; but as he made the first step out of his dwelling, the hitherto motionless men sprang to their feet, and in an instant an arrow was quivering in his thigh, and the discharge of two guns straight into his back brought him to the ground. Rushing upon him, the four men with the butts of their guns and with sticks beat the unfortunate Simon to death. When they were satisfied that he was dead, the avengers of blood dragged the body away, taking care none of them to enter the shadow of the dead man's house, until they came to the grave of their relative, the dead man's wife. But their work was

not done yet. True, he was dead, the murderer of their sister, but his jumbi or spirit might rise and haunt them for the deed they had done; so with a sharp machete they hacked off the dead man's head, and, after laying it for a moment on his wife's tomb, they buried it about fifty yards from the place, where the trunk was afterwards disposed of. All was now over—the murder of the woman had been avenged—the kanaima had been accomplished; but the avengers knew they had violated the laws imposed upon them by the conquerors of their country, so they went to Mr. McClintock, the three brothers, the father being left at home, and gave themselves up to him, saying, "We have killed Robert Simon because he murdered our sister." The kind-hearted old magistrate, who had lived amongst the Indians all his life, and had known these boys since they were born, wouldn't believe them, but they persisted in their statement, and offered to take him and show him where the body was buried. At last they persuaded him that they spoke the truth; so he made out an arrest warrant and arrested them. As there was no lock-up within thirty miles, he said to them, "Now, boys, you are arrested, and you must not leave my house until I tell you." To this they consented, and bringing their hammocks they slung them up under the magistrate's house, and slept that night the sleep of the just.

At that time I was Sheriff of Essequibo, so Mr. McClintock sent a message to me by an Indian, who came in his canoe up the Aripiàco

and Tappacooma rivers, across the Tappacooma Lake, and down the Anna Regina water-path to the police-station on that estate, where I was holding court. I communicated the contents of the note to the county inspector, who proceeded at once with some black policemen to the scene of the catastrophe. The bodies were found buried as I have decribed, and at the request of the Governor I held the investigation into the murder in the court-room at Anna Regina. My troubles were very slight. When the charge was read to them, all the three Indian brothers said, "Yes, we kill him, because he killed our sister." Depositions were taken, but the accused never cross-examined the witnesses, and seemed to think that I was taking much trouble to no purpose. They were quite harmless-looking young men, with the broad, beardless faces, small eyes, and straight black hair of their race. I committed them for trial at the Criminal Sessions, and they were removed to the county gaol at Suddie.

My house was nearly opposite the gaol, and, about two days afterwards, my quiet was invaded by about twelve Arawak women and children, the belongings of the men, who brought their hammocks and quietly slung them under my house, where they established themselves to await the turn of events. It was in vain that I requested them to remove, that I told them that it was useless for them to remain there; with the stolidity of their race they listened to me, but never budged a foot. How they lived I cannot imagine; they

never stole anything of mine, and I never gave them anything, except some bread and cakes to the little children. I gave the women passes sometimes to see their husbands in gaol. The Sessions came in due course; the Chief Justice came down to Suddie to deliver the gaol; and, amongst others, these three unfortunate men were brought before him. They made no defence, and were, of course, found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging.

The aboriginal Indians of Guiana—in fact, of any country—cannot endure confinement. Accustomed to wander at will through the forests and over the rivers of his splendid country, the native Indian pines away in confinement; like a wild bird, he beats his breast against the walls of his prison, and cries, "Give me freedom, or I die!" An Indian confined in the wooden lock-up at Malali tried to eat his way out with his teeth.

It was pitiable to see these poor men after only six weeks' confinement in prison. They were the shadows of their former plump selves, although by my orders as much liberty had been given to them as was compatible with security. After they were sentenced to death I wrote to the Governor on their behalf, and forwarded a petition which had been signed by the rector of the parish and some other kind folk. His Excellency took a merciful view of their case, and commuted their sentence to one of penal servitude for life. But was it a merciful view? Perhaps they had better been hanged. Immured in the penal settlement

on the banks of the Massaruni, these poor men pined away. Two of them soon died, and the third was released, as the surgeon certified that his life would also be sacrificed if he were kept any longer in the prison. When the convicts had left Suddie for the settlement my encampment of Indians broke up and disappeared as quietly and mysteriously as they arrived.

One of the principal causes of the extermination of native races before European civilization is the absurd practice of making these poor people wear clothes. The climate of Guiana is exceedingly warm and moist; up the rivers scarcely a day passes without several showers of rain; the natives, in consequence, go about in a nude state, and the rain as it falls runs off their oiled backs like water off the proverbial duck. But when, by the efforts of some well-meaning but misdirected missionary, they don clothes they soon become victims of phthisis and pneumonia, their clothes getting wet through and drying on their bodies several times a day. It is not from want of knowledge of clothes that the Indian goes naked. That absurd parody which says—

> "Lo the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
> Wears nought in front and goes all bare behind,"

is really a libel on the race, as they do so, not from an "untutored mind," but because they know by experience that such a want of costume is necessary for their habits and climate. Wearing of clothes is merely conventional, and if we all went about naked, in a few days no one would notice it.

When I was first brought into contact with the Indians of Guiana, the sight of the Indian girls and women entirely nude, with the exception of a bead apron about eight inches square called a queyo, used to astonish me; but after a day or two one accepted the fact as a matter of course, and one never seemed to notice whether they were nude or not. The Indians are quite capable of making clothes. They weave strong cloth for baby-slings, lapps, and other purposes, make excellent hammocks, and construct feather crowns of great beauty and ingenuity. Their baskets are neatly woven in geometric patterns, and the women's queyos are elegant specimens of beadwork.

It is a dangerous experiment to interfere with the immemorial customs and habits of an ancient race, and to preach to them doctrines strange and unnatural.

Infanticide is a crime unknown amongst the aboriginal Indians of Guiana, but it was my painful duty to preside over the trial of a young Indian woman for the murder of her new-born child. The motive for the murder could be clearly traced to the teaching of the well-meaning and kind-hearted lady missionary, who had been for years impressing upon the Indian girls the hitherto unknown doctrine that it would be a shame and disgrace for them to have a child before marriage; so this unfortunate girl strangled and buried in the sand the new-born babe, which in her untutored days she would have washed and pressed to her bosom.

Owing to the privileges granted to the Indians,

many low class white and coloured men married Indian women, and in the names of their wives carried on a trade in timber, shingles, gum, etc., to their mutual advantage. Punts covered with thatched roofs, and made into a kind of house-boats, sail up the rivers laden with canned provisions, calico, print, guns, powder, beer, and the prohibited rum, and traffic with the natives for timber, shingles, and other forest products. The sale of rum in British Guiana is surrounded by every restriction possible to invent, but the most stringent laws are sometimes evaded. Commissariat officers are always on the look out for these floating shops, and board them on every opportunity to search for rum. Some of the punts have false bottoms, under which lie snugly hid the prohibited bottles. Sometimes the rum is carried in large demijohns, which, securely corked, are sunk under the river's bank, when any alarm is raised.

One Boviander family on the Demerara River lived at a lovely place called Akyma, on a little hill, rising about thirty feet from the river, and crowned with feathery bamboos and tall cucurite and manicole palms. Their name was Bremner, and their immediate ancestor was a Dutchman, who had been post-holder at the Government post of Sebacabra, a hill on the right bank of the river about ninety miles from Georgetown.

The post-holder had married an Arawak woman, and after living to a good age, he was drowned whilst shooting the Malali rapids about ten miles

above his house, and was buried in his pepper-garden. In travelling up the rivers, we found that all the old settlements contain the graves of their former owners, sometimes for several generations, covered by gravestones rudely carved with names and dates. Bremner fils had established himself at Akyma in his father's lifetime; he married a half-caste woman, and had a numerous family of sons and daughters.

When I first knew him, he was a man of about fifty-five years of age, very stout and lazy, who spent his days in loafing about and smoking his pipe. His wife, who was a very energetic woman, carried on all the business, took out the wood-cutting grants, looked after the wood-cutters, saw the punts loaded, sold the timber, and spent the money. Their house was a good two-storied wooden building, raised upon high brick pillars, access to which was made by an ornamental cast-iron staircase, which Bremner in his younger and more active days had imported from England, and to which he always pointed with undisguised pride. On my last visit to Akyma, I found that the old house had fallen down and disappeared, and nothing was left but some broken-down brick pillars and the cast-iron staircase, standing erect and alone, leading nowhere, and of use to no one.

I slept at Bremner's house on several occasions on my way up and down the river, which was a tedious process, as there was no steamer in those days, and pulling a tent boat against the tide was a slow mode of progression. I always found old

Bremner ready for a drink and a chat, but I always had to provide the grog from my own stores.

He was then too lazy to travel, but he had a rooted dread of rapids. "No more rapids for me," he used to say; "they drowned my father, and they nearly drowned me, so no more rapids for me."

As I was strolling over the hill on which the house stands, under the shadow of a noble bamboo, I came across a grave marked by a wooden head-board, from which time had erased all remnants of name and date. On inquiry from old Bremner, he informed me that it was the grave of a young English or German naturalist, who had been collecting specimens up the river, and who was brought down by his Indian boatmen dying of fever, one night some years ago. The poor man was a corpse before morning, and the same day was laid in a grave beneath the bamboos. The Bremners put up the board with his name and the date of his death upon it; but tropical rain and sun had quickly removed all trace of these, and the family themselves had even forgotten his name. This was not the first unknown grave I had met with in this country, and standing by it, I could not but recall those beautiful and appropriate lines by Alaric Watts—

"He left his home with a swelling sail,
Of fame and fortune dreaming,
And a spirit as free as the vernal gale,
And the pennon above him streaming.
He reached his goal; 'neath a sultry sun
In a distant land they've laid him,

And stranger-forms bent o'er his grave,
Whilst the last sad rites were paid him.
But why repine? Can he feel the rays
That pestilent sun sheds o'er him?"

I was anxious at one time to attempt a collection of the inscriptions on the numerous old graves which are scattered about the colony, and I made an appeal to the clergy, officials, and general public to aid me in the matter. With that purpose I had a leaflet printed, explaining my wants, and quoting the lines of Alaric Watts as above. I forwarded these leaflets to all persons in authority, and amongst others to Inspector Stevenson on the west coast, and he in his turn sent them on to the different police-stations in his district. He was astonished at receiving the following report:—

SERGEANT BROWN *to* INSPECTOR STEVENSON.

"Fellowship Station.

"Received your instructions. Have made all inquiries, and searched the country. No grave of Alaric Watts discovered; name not known in the neighbourhood."

The old post of Sebacabra is an interesting place. A granite hill rises abruptly from the river, blocking its course, and forcing it to make a sharp curve to the left. The hill is nearly denuded of trees, which have been cut down to allow the grass to grow for cattle; here and there clumps of palms and bamboos break the skyline, or stand out against the hill. On the shelving

granite rocks at the river's brink the house is built, surrounded by fruit trees. When I first visited the river, Seba belonged to a woodcutter named Allicock, who lived there with his wife, pretty little daughter, and sister-in-law. Mrs. Allicock was a white lady of Scotch descent, and a very handsome, dignified body she was. There was a deep pool in the river in front of the house, and this we used to draw with a seine on moonlight nights, landing at times a great number of strange and bright-hued fishes. One night, as we were hauling, paddling slowly in two boats, the seine felt very heavy, and we thought that we had made a fine haul of fish, when suddenly from the centre of the net arose a huge monster, black as ink against the moonlight, with great dark jaws extended into the air. With loud exclamations of terror, the Indians dropped the lines, and, with a sudden splash, the monster fell back into the deep. "Good heavens, Allicock! what is that?" I exclaimed. "I don't know," said he; "never saw anything like it before." The bucks were talking in a low voice amongst themselves, and I caught the word "water-mamma," which is a legendary monster, supposed to inhabit certain reaches of the river, and to drag unfortunate wayfarers under the waves. However, water-mamma or not, we must have it out if we can; so the men resumed the ropes, and began hauling again, and once more the formidable monster reared up its bulk as before, and fell back with a resounding splash. Allicock burst out laughing.

"I know what it is, sir; it is an old sunk woodskin!" And so it was. A woodskin is an Indian canoe, made from the bark of the bullet tree, and kept open by two pieces of wood stretched across and fastened by llianes. Being somewhat pointed at both ends, as it was hauled up it seemed like the head of a huge alligator against the bright moonlight.

A dance was a great institution amongst the river folk. As many of them came from long distances, it was not thought worth while to spend only a few hours in dancing. On one occasion, when I was present, at Seba, the company met at six p.m., began dancing soon afterwards, kept it up till four a.m., and, after a long rest in the daytime, began again with renewed energy at sunset, and danced on to another dawn. The band consisted of an old 'cello, a fiddle, a triangle, and a tom-tom.

Christianburgh, about seventy miles from Georgetown, was the residence of a Scotch family named Paterson. The house was one of the largest and best built in the colony. A large sawmill is near the house, worked by water-power, and behind stretch the red, shingle-roofed cottages of the employés. The landing-place was marked by a flagstaff, and flanked by two old Dutch cannon, which thundered forth a welcome when the Governor or some other swell paid a visit to the river. The interior of the house was a surprise to me when I first entered it, as it seemed to transport one back to the old country. There

was, of course, an absence of carpets and curtains, but the furniture had all come from Scotland many years before. There was a large grandfather's clock ticking solemnly against the wall; an old spindle-legged sideboard, with brass handles of lions' heads, with rings in their mouths; large horsehair-covered chairs; thin-legged tables, and badly-painted oil portraits in dingy gilt frames against the walls. Upstairs, the bedrooms were nearly filled with huge wooden four-post beds, with heavy testers, into which one had to climb with the help of a chair.

The dignified old widow who, in my time, presided over the establishment, was a fit jewel for such a case; she was a living proof of the healthiness of the river for persons of temperate habits, as she retained her strength of mind and body to the last, and died at the advanced age of eighty-eight years.

One of the most remarkable characters on the river was an old black man, named Alleyne, a sergeant of rural constables, who had charge of the Dalgin district. There were no police up the river higher than Hyde Park, a small village, twenty-five miles from town, opposite the Chinese settlement on the Camounie Creek; the remainder of the river was guarded by rural constables, of which Alleyne was chief at Dalgin, and a man named Blunt (of whom more later) at Mora. Dalgin station was a low thatched house, in which one little room was reserved for the magistrate on his periodical visits, the narrow gallery being

used as a court-room. There was no lock-up; so, when I sentenced a man to imprisonment, Sergeant Alleyne used to chain him to a tree by the leg, until a convenient time arrived to send him to town. The house swarmed with bats, cockroaches, and all sorts of vermin; but one gets accustomed to these things in time, and they never disturbed my slumbers as I rocked in my long grass hammock slung from the roof-trees. Alleyne was a Barbadian by birth, and had been a slave in his youth. He came to British Guiana, when only a lad, in his master's train, and was employed as a wood-cutter and sawyer. When he became free, after Emancipation Day, he worked on his own account, and soon acquired enough money to take out a wood-cutting license, and, as green-heart was then selling at a good price, he prospered, bought two lots of land at Dalgin, and built the house which I have described.

He was an honest, pleasant, respectful old gentleman, and many a yarn he would spin about his experiences in the old days. He was a great authority in the river; people came to consult him on questions of law, or claim his protection in any difficulty. He also kept a small stock of simple medicines, which he sold to the sick, and had self-confidence enough to perform, on occasions, surgical operations. He described one to me. A man came to him suffering from a large tumour on his back, which Alleyne said must be removed. "But, surely, you didn't

attempt it?" said I. "You should have sent the man to the Colonial Hospital." "Oh yes, sir; I laid him on his face, and cut out the tumour with a small butcher's knife." "Good gracious! But how did the man stand it?" "Oh, I gave him half a bottle of brandy to deaden the pain! But he groaned a great deal." "I should think he did," said I, laughing; but I warned him that he must not do such a thing again, as the man might have died, in which event Alleyne would have been tried for manslaughter. Alleyne was thrice married, and survived all his wives.

Mora, another station higher up the river, near the Malali Rapids, was a still more dilapidated place than Dalgin. There was originally a wood-cutting grant there belonging to a man named Brittlebank, who sometime in the thirties obtained a grant of occupancy from the Government, and built a substantial house about one hundred yards from the river. The house was in bad repair when I first knew it, and consisted of one sitting-room and two small bedrooms; the sitting-room was used by the magistrate on his visits, as a court-room and dining-room by day, and as a bedroom by night. Sleeping appliances are easy in the bush, and consist of an Indian hammock slung from rings which have been screwed into the beams which support the rafters. For bathing, we repaired to the river, and a small mirror hanging on the wall of the house was the only accessory to our toilet.

Mora House was surrounded by enormous

mango and orange trees; the mangoes were as large as English oaks, and the fruit of the oranges was the best I ever tasted. It was a lovely spot, and many a happy day I spent there, walking, shooting, fishing, and sketching. As I have said, the post was in charge of a man named Arthur Blunt, a quadroon, the offspring of a Scotchman and a mulatto woman. His father had sent him to Glasgow as a boy, where he had received a fair education. He had been a wood-cutter on a small scale, and obtaining a grant near Mora, had established himself in Brittlebank's house. Brittlebank himself had been dead some years; he is said to have been a miserly man, who buried his money under the hearth in his kitchen. Large sums were said to be so concealed, and after his death treasure-seekers used to visit his old quarters and dig about in all likely places in the hope of some rich discovery. One man is reputed to have returned to town and set up a shop, no one knowing where he got the money to stock it. The ghost of Brittlebank is said to haunt his old place, and may be seen hunting about and wringing his hands over his lost treasure.

Blunt had been thrice married. His first wife was an Arawak Indian; his second a Miss Forsyth, sister to Mrs. Allicock, of Seba; and his third a mulatto girl, who had inherited a buxom figure and a small fortune from her parents. He had children by all his wives, and they formed a strange variety of human types. British Guiana would have afforded an interesting study for

Darwin, Spencer, and other ethnologists and sociologists, as owing to the numerous and distinct races inhabiting the colony, the most curious results of miscegenation are obtained. One of the prettiest girls I ever saw in the colony was the offspring of a Madras coolie and an Accawoio Indian.

Blunt often accompanied me as my pilot up the rapids when I visited the higher reaches of the river, and I was much amused by his stories of river life, and by his comments on men and things. I remember how startled I was when I first knew him. We were paddling along under a broiling sky, between the high banks of forest which lined either side of the river. Blunt had the rudder-lines in his hands. We had not spoken for some minutes, when he turned to me and said, "What is your opinion, sir? Do you think Massèna or Soult was the greatest general?" "Great Scott! man," I exclaimed, "what do you know about Massèna or Soult?" It turned out that a bug-hunter who visited the Demerara River had been assisted by Blunt, and knowing his love of reading, had sent him some books, amongst which was Napier's "Peninsular War," hence Blunt's inquiries. However, it was rather a startling question to be asked by a bare-footed Boviander under the circumstances, and I felt somewhat at a loss to give an immediate opinion. At St. Helena I believe Napoleon gave his verdict in favour of Soult.

My crew on the river was composed of Kroomen

from Africa; they were splendid men, with filed teeth, and tattooed on their noses and cheeks. They were tireless oarsmen and splendid swimmers; and when their arms became a little weary, they roused their spirits by chanting wild Kroo songs, which marked time to the measured beat of the oars.

Joe, my stroke and captain, was a sterling sober man, to be trusted to the end with life and property. He amused me often by his solicitude for my welfare. Once we had penetrated beyond the Great Falls to a country unknown to us all. Before sunset we landed at a sand hill to make our camp for the night, and unexpectedly found ourselves near a camp of Arecuna and Macusi Indians, who had gathered together for a piwarrie feast. I went amongst them, but found them half drunk, and in consequence ruder and surlier than any Indians I had met before. However, I slung my hammock near the waterside, and lulled by the singing and other sounds of revelry, soon slept the sleep of the just. I was awakened by some one shaking my hammock, and called out, "Who is that?" "It's me, Bass," said Joe's voice. "What do you want?" "Bass, this no good place; too much bad man here." "Oh, nonsense; go to sleep." But nothing would stop him; he kept shaking my hammock and saying, "Let we go, Bass; not good for stop," until he finally worried me out of my hammock, which he quickly unslung, and guiding me to the boat, I was soon aboard, and rolled up in my rug under the awning

I completed my broken slumbers. When I awoke it was broad daylight, and we were some miles from our Indian friends. On cross-questioning Joe, he said that the Indians were getting very drunk and quarrelsome; they had bows, guns, and knives, and he was afraid they might do us some injury. I couldn't help thinking that he had one thought for me and another for himself and his chums, as there is no love lost between the Indians and the Africans, as in the old days the Indians were subsidized by the Government to catch all runaway slaves. These runaway slaves were sometimes not captured, but formed settlements in the forest, and were known as maroons. These men took Indian wives, and their descendants were gradually absorbed in the Indian stock; but you can still trace the negro blood. In a trip which I made up the Berbice River with my old friend Bridges, M. Ledoux, Vice-Consul of France, and Arthur Braud, of Mon Repos, we met at the Vieruni Creek and at Tiger Hill a number of Indians who had curly hair, and other marks of the negro type about them.

CHAPTER VIII.

Decay of river population—Rise of the gold industry—Kanaimapoo—Mecropie—Water-mammas — Coomarroo—Vampire bats — George Couchman—Visit to the Orarumalali Falls—Derrire Hill—Comarramarra—Koomparoo Rapids—Camanna fish—Carroquia—Eneyeudah mission—Thunderstorm—Great Falls—Snakes — Palaver with the Indians—Captain Tiger—Dyed Indians—Scarlet dog—Her Majesty's penal settlement—Massaruni River—Ticket-of-leave men—Convicts —Their sentiments—Confidence in magistrates—The wife of Ramdass —Kykoveral—Fort Island—Fred Hamblin—Theatrical entertainment—West Indian Regiment—Colonel Fygelmesy—New Amsterdam ball—Old Woolward—Life in New Amsterdam—Dr. Hackett—Anthony Trollope—Official etiquette—D. M. Gallagher—Lunatic Asylum — Corentyne coast — Smuggling — Wild duck shooting—Elections—Vendue—Atlantic voyages.

The river population has much decreased of late years, owing, in a great degree, to the decline in the timber trade. Nearly all the old houses belonging to a sturdy race of Bovianders have disappeared.

Wooden buildings in the damp heat of the equatorial belt are soon destroyed, if abandoned for a few years. Ants, beetles, and other vermin finish the damage which damp has begun, and, in a few years, a heap of bricks, where the kitchen and house-pillars stood, are the sole remains of a once flourishing homestead. Two or three



VIEW FROM GOLD HILL, DEMERARA RIVER.

[*To face p.* 174.

stately cabbage palms, and some huge mango, orange, and calabash trees show where the hands of man once laboured to make a home in the forest.

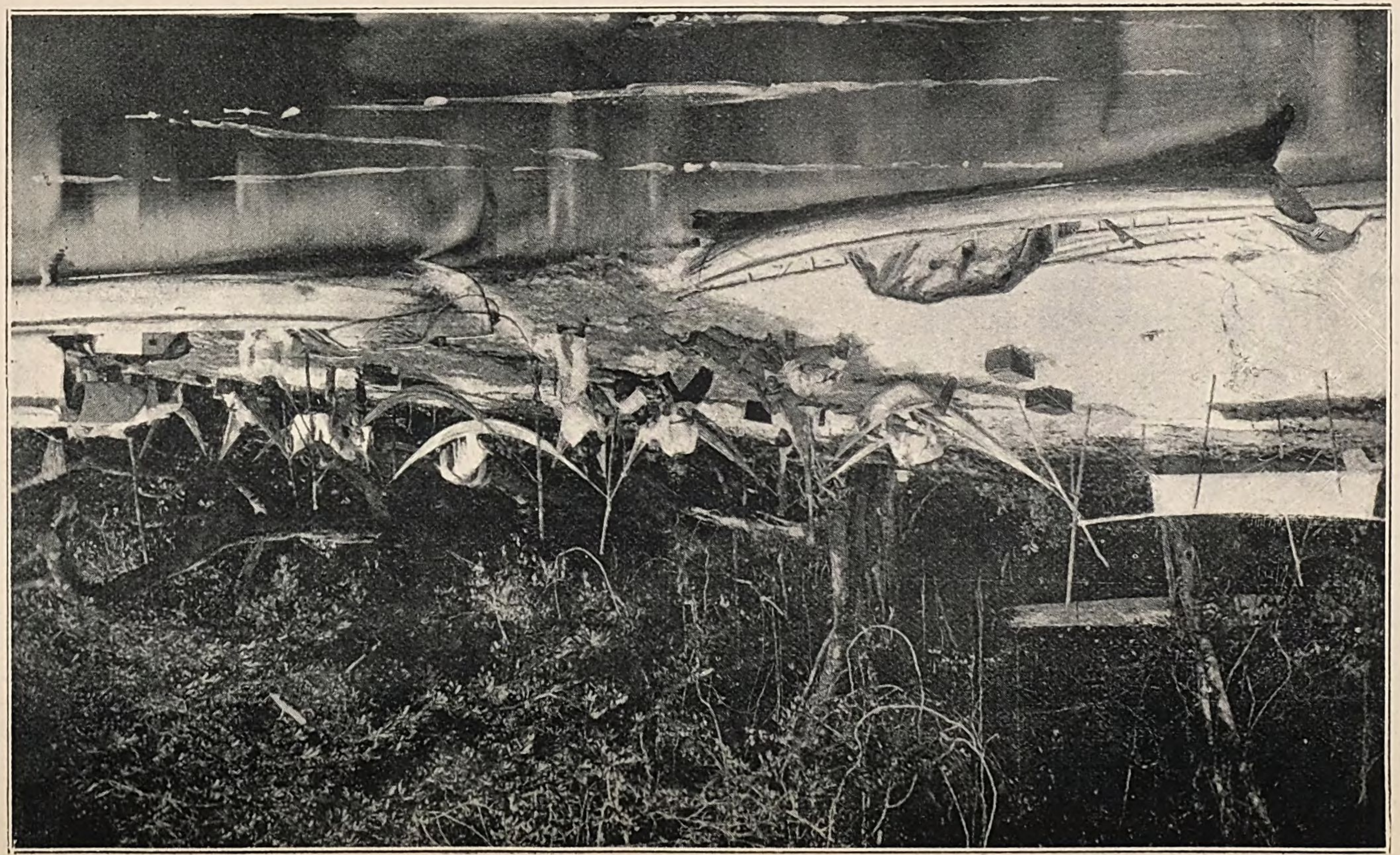
Now there are police-stations at different places for a hundred miles up the river; a bi-weekly steamer carries officials, police, and mails seventy miles of that distance, and a steam launch runs up to the first rapids. A railway has been constructed to unite the Demerara and Essequibo rivers; a gold mine had been worked at a spot just below the Great Falls. So the old life of the river has passed away, and it has become a mere highway for gold-diggers and speculators. The gold company up the Demerara River was called the Kanaimapoo, which reminds me of an old Accawoio chief of the same name, who lived on a sand hill near the place where the mine is now located. When I first saw him, in 1872, he was a very old man—tall for an Indian, his whole body covered with innumerable wrinkles. He was attired in the customary lapp, suspended from a string round his waist, and on his head an enormous black beaver topper, which had been presented to him by a former governor. He carried in his hand a long walking-stick with a round knob on the top—the emblem of his authority. He was a wonderful spectacle, and had a very good opinion of himself. "De Gubna," he told me in his broken English, "he tell me Kanaimapoo you come town; we make you Gubment Sectry, anyting you like; but when me tought ob de cassada me couldn't go."

Cassava is the favourite and principal food of the Indians, which the chief evidently thought he could not get in Georgetown.

Mecropie is the name of a hill beyond the Malali Rapids. It has a bad reputation with the Indians, and they are always unusually silent and watchful as they glide round the deep pool which lies under its shadow. If it be possible, as it often is, to find an eetaboo, they will pass through it to avoid the dreaded hill. They have a legend that some black runaway slaves were shot there, and thrown from the hill into the river, where they were turned into water-mammas, and these water-mammas are always on the look-out for unwary travellers, upset their canoes, and drag them down into horrid depths. The Indians thoroughly believe in these water-spirits, and that great danger awaits any one who passes by their caves and retreats. There are different kinds of water-mammas. Some are extremely beautiful, Circe-like creatures, with golden hair and sweet voices, and, when they sing, madness seizes the traveller, and he leaps into the water, and sinks for ever beneath the waves; others are hideous, like Medusa, with snakes twined round their heads and bosoms, and with their huge claw-like hands they drag boats down and drown their occupants. Circes, mermaids, and sirens seem to be as well known in the New World as in the Old.

At Coomarroo, above Akyma, a Frenchman had established himself, squatting on Crown land. Like most of his nation, he was of an excitable

GOLD-MINERS' CAMP, ESSEQUIBO RIVER.



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temperament, and when he was in his cups he formed the impression that the Indians were coming to murder him; so every boat or canoe he saw approaching his landing, he greeted with a charge of shot from his fowling-piece. These friendly attentions prevented him from being troubled with many afternoon callers, so he was left alone, and, I believe, perished miserably.

Vampire bats are very troublesome to travellers in the forests of Guiana. Whenever I slept out in the bush, I had a lamp burning over my hammock to scare them away. Old Mr. Couchman, a coloured woodcutter and J.P. up the Demerara River, amused me by a story of a missionary, who stopped at his house in his travels. When the worthy man retired to his hammock in the open gallery, Couchman advised him to allow him to hang a lamp over his sleeping-place, but it was refused, the missionary saying that he put his trust in a higher power. About one a.m. Couchman was aroused by shouts from the missionary, "Mr. Couchman! Mr. Couchman! come quick!" Running to his assistance, Couchman found that a vampire bat had settled above the unfortunate man's nose, bitten out a triangular piece of skin, and from the wound the blood had trickled down over his beard and shirt.

Blunt once showed me fifteen marks on his feet and legs which vampires had made. When they fasten on to you, they fan you gently with their wings, and you never awaken until the loss of blood causes an unpleasant sensation.

In September, 1873, during one of my magisterial circuits, I paid a visit to the Oraru-Malali Falls of the Demerara River for the first time. I was staying with Mr. George Couchman at his house, "The Retreat," when he offered to take me up, an offer which I gladly accepted. It was on the 10th of September, at 5 a.m., when we made a start. After pulling for a few hours we passed Derrire Hill, the highest I had as yet seen in Demerara. The river about here is very lovely; no houses, not even buck-huts; for miles we never saw a soul. The stream was very strong, so our progress was not rapid. We stopped about noon for breakfast at a pretty place called Coomarramara, where is a small creek of clear water, like rain-water, unlike most of the rivers and creeks in the colony, whose waters are the colour of weak coffee. We climbed a steep sand bank, which was surmounted by two or three buck-huts, in which we found a couple of good-looking girls swinging in their hammocks. One of them had just been confined, and I nearly sat down upon the baby, which was rolled up in another hammock, and quite invisible. We had a merry breakfast, although the heat was frightful, and starting again at 1 p.m., two hours' pulling brought us to the foot of the Koomparoo Rapids. The entrance to the rapid was almost closed up by low rocks, bright crimson purple in colour, one or two of the largest covered with bush; but there were two fair channels through which the river rushed. For a mile we went up the swirling waters to the

head of the rapid, where another ledge of rocks seemed to bar our exit. In getting round to the most practicable channel, we were washed on to a gravel bank. All hands overboard to track the boat off, then all in at once, and pull like fury to avoid the back eddy, and take us over the race. However, it was all accomplished safely, and we were soon in smooth water. We met some bucks in their woodskins above the rapids, and they gave us some camanna, a fish like a small bream, with half a dozen large scarlet spots on each side, which were pretty to look at, and good for food. A few miles further we passed Caroquia, which is another place avoided by the Indians. Their water-mammas in this place take the shape of huge scarlet macaws, which rise out of the river and drag them beneath the water, woodskins and all. We had the usual thunderstorm at 4.30, and when it cleared away we could see the lofty hill behind the Great Falls looking black and solemn; against its dark background could be seen the mist from the cataract rising and floating away in white streamers, whilst the vivid lightning behind the hill threw its outlines into high relief.

It was quite dark when we reached the hill on which the Eneyeudah Mission was built. We scrambled up, and were guided to the wretched hut inhabited by the superintendent, a miserable old man who did nothing but bewail his rheumatism and dismal fate. He brightened up as he watched the unpacking of the stores; his eyes sparkled at sight of my brandy bottle, and in his eagerness

to drink a glassful which I gave him he spilt some of the liquid down his grey beard. Everything was soaking wet with the tremendous rain; but as the floor in old Shaw's (the superintendent's) hut seemed pretty dry, Couchman and I slung our hammocks there. Sergeant Alleyne and the men went into the church, which consisted of a dozen poles supporting a roof of cucurrite palm leaves. We managed to dine in a rough way, and, after a cup of good tea, turned into our hammocks with a cigar. Certainly a cigar in your hammock in the balmy air of a tropical night is a pleasing sensation. We were soon asleep, to be rudely awakened by a violent thunder-storm. The thunder shook our frail house, the lightning dazzled us with its incessant glare, and the rain came down in torrents. Loud grumblings from Couchman; the rain was pouring into his hammock, so he tumbled out. "Oh!" said I, "I am quite dry; come and sling near to me." Alas! I had hardly spoken when splodge! splodge! came the rain in my face. It was no use moving, so I wrapped myself in a rug, spread my overcoat as well as I could over me, and wished for the dawn.

The longest night must end, so at last the day broke, and a strong cup of coffee, with an egg beaten up in it and well laced with brandy, set us all to rights. As soon as it was light we set off to the falls, leaving Alleyne and one of the hands to cook breakfast, taking a tall Accawoio Indian with us. The morning was damp and misty, but by 7 a.m. the sun shone out, and

the clouds rolled away. Soon after we left our landing-place we met great clots of foam, like cream cheese, floating down the river; soon we heard the rush of the water, and half an hour's pull brought us in sight of the fall. We landed on a sandy beach, and I sat down to make a sketch of the general view. Unfortunately, there is an island of rocks in the middle of the fall, dividing it into two parts, and the rocks being covered with trees, the head of the cataract was invisible from where I sat. We pulled across the deep swirling pool, and landed on the rocks at the foot of the cataract. These rocks are of a dark purplish colour, and cut on them we found the names of former travellers; one, C. F. Cox, 1826, was quite readable. Couchman and myself set off for a scramble over rocks and fallen trees to the head of the fall. It was a very trying ascent, the boulders were so large and slippery with moss; great fallen trees blocked our way, but we found a kind of rough track made by the Indians, and, after a tremendous scramble, we got up to the head of the waterfall, the sight of which well repaid our trouble. A dark, purple-brown river, forty to fifty yards wide, is suddenly contracted and sent headlong down ledges of rock to the depth of nearly seventy feet. Halfway down it is divided, as I have said, by a rocky island covered with trees, which splits the falling water, and, whilst diminishing its grandeur, adds to its beauty. The whole is surrounded by the most luxuriant vegetation; the most lovely

orchids, ferns, selaginellas, and mosses drink in the ever-rising mist and spray; brilliant butterflies and kingfishers shoot over the waters with a velocity almost equal to their own; whilst the great fish-eagles swoop down into the pool at the foot of the fall, and seize the struggling himaira. In the rainy season it must be a grand spectacle, and its mighty roar can then be heard in the stillness of night as far as Aniparoo, a distance of eight miles. Ibe Falls are in latitude 5° 8′ 2″ N.

I wished I could have lingered for a whole day collecting ferns and sketching, but we had no time to stop; so down we went, breaking our shins over the rocks and trees, till we reached the boat, dirty and exhausted. As for heat, it was indescribable; the whole place was like a vapour bath, and the exertions we had made nearly killed us. Even the tough, wiry Couchman was wet through and done up for a time. I didn't get back my breath till we had shot down to our resting-place, much quicker than we had come up. We found that the noble sergeant had an excellent breakfast for us—fried himaira, tinned sausages, pepper pot, buck yams, beer, and brandy; so, after a plunge in the river, and a good rub down, we made a hearty meal. After breakfast, the Indians brought two snakes, which they had killed early in the morning in front of our quarters. One was the labarri, a snake about four feet long, of a light brown colour, with chestnut streaks on the back and sides. It is said

to be the most deadly snake in the country. The other was the lanaria, a large snake, about six feet long, bluish-grey back and whitish belly; it is also poisonous, and a cannibal, devouring other smaller snakes.

In the mean while, Alleyne had mustered the Indians, under their chief, Captain Tiger, for a palaver. They were all of the Accawoio race, a tallish, handsome people with straight black hair, small eyes, and high cheek-bones. They were all almost entirely nude, except Captain Tiger, who rejoiced in a striped cotton shirt and felt wideawake. The younger women were not bad looking, but many of them were in a condition more interesting than elegant. The children were pretty, though very pot-bellied, and they crawled about my feet with complete confidence. I harangued the people, through Couchman as interpreter, and told them of their good deeds and misdeeds. It was a curious scene: myself in cricketing flannels, cigar in mouth; Captain Tiger standing opposite with his legs wide apart; a double row of bucks squatting on their hams on one side, a number of women standing or squatting on the other; the perpendicular sun and dark shadows; the rude buck-huts and graceful palms; the glaring white sand, across which numerous lizards were darting; in the background, the dark hills and the roar of the distant cataract. The palaver was soon over, some medicine and tobacco distributed, farewells said, and we were afloat again, this time with our

faces homewards. Merrily the boat shot down the stream, the Kroomen finding the work very different to the previous day, for, although we did not start until noon, we were at Mr. Couchman's by 5 p.m., doing in five hours what took us twelve on the previous day.

On our way down we saw some strange figures on the river's bank, so I sent Alleyne to bring them for inspection. After some difficulty he persuaded them to come with him, and he returned with four bucks in their usual undress, and with their legs painted a bright vermilion. We discovered that they were Accawoios from the Potaro River, and were returning home by the Koomparoo path to the Essequibo River. There were two men, a young woman and an old one. They had a dog with them painted all over with vermilion, which made it look frightful. This painting was to keep off that irritating tick called *bête rouge* or patouche.

We shot the Koomparoo Rapids without difficulty, the boat leaping and rushing the waters like a horse. By Derrire Hill we heard the note of the ecarnanya, which the Indians say always foretells good news to any one who hears it.

One of the prettiest places in the colony is Her Majesty's penal settlement, on the left bank of the Massaruni River, about sixty miles from George-town, and three miles above Bartica. It is situated on a low granite hill, which slopes down to the river; it was established in 1845. When I came to the colony there was no Inspector of prisons, so

one of the stipendiary magistrates was detailed by the Governor every month to visit and inspect the penal settlement, and report on its condition. I was sent up twice on this errand, and enjoyed the trip, as the country was pretty, and a pleasant change from the dismal flatness of the coast. I remember old General Munro, who was commanding the troops in the West Indies, went up with me on one occasion, and he was so pleased with the settlement that he told Governor Scott on his return, "Why don't you all go and live up the Massaruni, and send the convicts to Georgetown? They are much better located than you are."

On another occasion I paid a visit in distinguished company. One dull morning in April, 1874, the s.s. *Rattlesnake* left the steamer stelling in Georgetown at 8 a.m., bound for the penal settlement. Our party consisted of H.E. Sir J. R. Longden, with his private secretary, Fred Hamblin; Edward N. Walker, Acting Government Secretary, now Sir Edw. Noel Walker, K.C.M.G., Colonial Secretary of Ceylon; Mr. N. Cox, Inspector-General of Police; Mr. W. B. Pollard, Colonial Civil Engineer; Mrs. Kirke, and myself. The water was calm as we steamed into the Atlantic, and, although a slight shower fell, it was fine weather when we turned into the vast estuary of the Essequibo (twenty miles wide), passing the island of Leguan between 10 and 11 a.m. We steamed quickly through the hundred islands of the Essequibo, and turned into the Massaruni about 3.30 p.m. We left Bartica, and passing

Kaow Island and its leper asylum on our right, we soon came in sight of the prison. We landed at 4 p.m., and walked up a steep path to the commissioner's house, where quarters were assigned to us.

There are about two hundred to two hundred and fifty convicts at Massaruni, though of course their number varies. They are principally employed in quarrying granite, which is sent to Georgetown for building and paving purposes. The whole of the sea-wall, two miles in length, is built of granite from the penal settlement. There is also a large farm on which the weaker men are employed; and large quantities of vegetables are raised for the use of the convicts, and cows and sheep supply the establishment with milk and meat. The convicts are well looked after, and seem to lead a pleasant life; in fact, the old hands are seldom averse to returning thither. Captain Portlock Dadson, a late superintendent of the settlement, told me that when he was building the new stone jetty and river-wall at the stelling his foreman and best mason was a sturdy old convict, whose long term of penal servitude was just expiring, and he was about to be released on ticket-of-leave; so Captain Dadson said to him, "I am sorry, William, you are going out to-morrow, for I don't know whom I can get to take your place as foreman." The man replied, "Don't vex, Bass; me soon come back again and finish the job." And so he did. Before many weeks were over he was sent back to the penal

settlement for ten years, for burglary and larceny, and was able to superintend the completion of the work.

The convicts of superior education—white men who cannot work under a tropical sun—are employed as clerks, book-keepers, and billiard-markers. On one occasion, playing a game of billiards, our marker was a young Portuguese, who had been tried and sentenced to death for the brutal murder of a girl in Georgetown.

In later days, when I have visited the settlement, I have recognized scores of men who have been before me when sitting as judge or magistrate, and they generally recognize me; many of them smile and touch their caps; a few scowl at me with such a ferocious aspect that I am pleased to think sentries with loaded rifles are surrounding us. But this is an exception, for, as a rule, convicts and prisoners bear no grudge against the judge or magistrate who tries and sentences them; their hatred is directed against the persons who caused their arrest, or who gave evidence against them. They clearly understand that the magistrates and police are paid officials who must do their duty and earn their pay. I have often been addressed in the most friendly manner by men whom I had sentenced to imprisonment, and who seemed quite hurt if I didn't remember them and all their troubles.

But the greatest mark of confidence ever shown to me was by an East Indian immigrant in Essequibo. He was a splendid man, tall and handsome,

a driver on Plantation Johanna Cecilia, but he had a violent temper, and would often strike the men under his charge, sometimes very severely. He had been brought before me, as sheriff, on two occasions, and I had fined him, and on the last appearance I had warned him that next time he was convicted of a similar offence he must go to gaol. Some weeks afterwards he was again brought before me at Suddie, charged with assaulting and beating an indentured immigrant at Johanna Cecilia. He pleaded guilty, and, reminding him of my promise, I sentenced him to thirty days' imprisonment with hard labour. He salaamed in silence as he left the dock. The next morning, as I was sitting in my gallery at Sarnia House, a fine, tall Hindoo arrived, leading a very pretty young Indian woman, covered with jewelry, and attired in bright colours. They came upstairs into the gallery, and after profound salaams the man said, "Sahib, you sent me brudder gaol yesterday." "Oh," I said, "is Ramdass your brother?" "Yes, and me brudder say, suppose magistrate sahib send em gaol, wife take em and tell magistrate sahib for keep em, so sahib me bring em," pointing to the young lady, who gave me a raking look out of her large eyes, and then turned them modestly to the floor. It was some time before I could convince him that such a thing was impossible; till at last they went away much disappointed, the young lady pouting somewhat *spretæ injuria formæ.* Young handsome women, whose husbands are sent to gaol, run great risks on

sugar estates, where there are scores of young men unprovided with wives; so I presume that Ramdass preferred that the sheriff alone should look after his wife, rather than leave her to the tender mercies of his countrymen.

We were comfortably established in the commissioner's house, which is one of the finest houses in the colony, built entirely of crab-wood. My wife strolled with me over to the cemetery and the farm, whilst the Governor and other officials inspected the prison. We spent two pleasant days at Massaruni, visiting various places of interest—a village of Accawoio Indians on the banks of the Cuyuni; the island of Kykoveral, which was in old days the seat of the Dutch governors, and where may still be seen a noble arched gateway, the entrance to the old fort.

We had two amusing accidents during our stay. At breakfast one morning, sitting opposite the Governor, and arguing warmly with him on some subject, my chair, undermined by wood ants, collapsed altogether, and I shot under the table. The surgeon and two other gentlemen rushed at me, and dragged me out; the former, thinking I had a fit, was dancing round like Bob Sawyer with his lancet; however, nothing but laughter occurred. Again, we had all retired to rest one night, when we were awakened by an astounding noise, which resounded through the house like thunder. The men rushed out to see what had happened, and discovered that one of the hooks which supported Willie Pollard's hammock had

been drawn out by his weight, and he had shot out on his head on to the floor with a mighty crash.

On our way back to town we landed at Fort Island in the Essequibo River, which was the seat of government under the Dutch, after they left Kykoveral, where the commandant of Essequibo lived and ruled. We inspected the old fort, the citadel of which is a definable ruin. Of the ancient Court of Policy Hall and adjoining church, the walls are still standing, and in the church there can still be deciphered the inscriptions on the tombs of the defunct worthies who lie buried within its precincts. Sir James Longden took great interest in these antiquities, and obtained an annual grant of money from the Combined Court to be devoted to their preservation.

I have mentioned Fred Hamblin, the Governor's nephew and private secretary. He was one of the most charming men I ever met, and my most intimate friend from '74, until he left the colony. I never knew any man who could equal him in endurance. Many a night he has passed at the barracks dancing and card-playing, not going home till 6 a.m., yet at 7 a.m., after a bath and a cup of coffee, he would be found sitting in his office, calmly writing out despatches for the Secretary of State. I can recall some wild pranks which we were guilty of at this time. One night we had been acting *Don Cæsar de Bazan* at the Philharmonic Hall; I had been the "Don," and Hamblin had taken another character. We were

both dressed in the height of fashion; velvet coats slashed with satin, deep lace collars and frills, pink satin tights, boots and spurs, long curled wigs and large hats with white plumes, large swords at our sides, and got-up faces; we looked two proper ruffians. After the performance, dressed as we were, the whole company adjourned to the barracks at Eve Leary for supper; and at 1 a.m., after the ladies had retired, some one proposed loo, and we adjourned upstairs to Colonel Mould's rooms, and sat down to cards. We played on until the morning gun fired at 5 a.m., when some one suggested it was about time to go home; but a big pool was on, and then some one was looed again, so that before everything was satisfactorily settled it was broad daylight, and all the people were turning out to market. We then realized the state we were in. It was impossible to get a cab, so, as each moment made things worse, Hamblin and I pulled our large hats over our faces, drew our swords and started at full pace over the parade ground, down Parade Street, across the canal bridge and railway, shouting, waving our swords, and scattering the people as we tore along. Cries of "Ow! ow! oh, me Gad! what is this?" met us on all sides as we dashed down Main Street, and I bolted into my lodgings at the corner of Newmarket Street, and nearly frightened my old landlady, Miss Rose, into a fit as I met her on the staircase.

Some of the young officers of the West Indian Regiment were wild devils. Two of them played

a joke which might have cost them their commissions. The American Consul at that time in Georgetown was Colonel Fygelmesy, a Hungarian warrior and patriot, aide-de-camp to Kossuth, and a *beau sabreur*. Proud and particular, he was just the butt for these wild dare-devils. In front of his house the Consul had erected a huge flag-staff, which he had designedly made taller than the neighbouring one at Government House, so that the Stars and Stripes might flaunt in the breeze higher than the Union Jack. This offended the soldiers; so one night two of them, having shot an old carrion crow, and purchased a useful article of bedroom furniture which is usually kept concealed, fastened the two together and hoisted them up to the top of the American Consul's flag-staff. Intense was the wrath of that warrior when he arose in the morning, and saw these vile objects suspended in the place where the flag of his adopted country should wave. Dressing in haste, he rushed over to Government House, demanded an audience of the Governor, and the detection and punishment of these miscreants who had insulted the United States flag. He reported the matter to his Government, and made such a fuss over the incident that the Governor ordered every inquiry to be made by the police. But senior Inspector Hill, who was detailed for this service, and who was a great friend of the soldiers, whilst prosecuting his inquiries with great apparent vigour, took care that nothing incriminating any one should be discovered. Many of us knew the

culprits, but of course we all sat tight and said nothing.

In the same year, 1874, a grand ball was given to the Governor and Lady Longden in New Amsterdam, the capital of Berbice. Dancing and drinking were kept up with spirit until 5.30 a.m., when the last of the ladies disappeared. Some enthusiastic Scotchmen and Irishmen then began dancing reels. I walked over to the hotel at six, had a shower bath and some hot coffee, put on morning clothes and returned to the Town Hall, where I found some mad fellows still shouting and skipping about, whilst a wild Irishman had taken off his coat, was trailing it along the floor and requesting the company generally to tread on the tail of it.

I joined the vice-regal party at 8 a.m., on board the s.s. *Berbice*, and we started for Georgetown, where, after a rough voyage, we arrived at 3 p.m., and had just time for three hours' sleep before dressing for an official dinner at Government House. And all this with the thermometer never below 86°! No wonder our livers used to get out of order; but it was all put down to "that dreadful climate." Old Woolward, the captain of the *Don*, used to say "Demerara, yes you have fever in Demerara, and not content with that, but you must import more of it in wooden cases containing twelve bottles each."

New Amsterdam in the seventies was a delightful place to visit. It was full of pretty women and jovial men, who were profuse in their hospitality.

Never was such drinking. There used to be current in the colony some doggerel verses about swizzles, which ran as follows :—

"Essequibo for length,
Demerara for strength,
The city for plenty of ice—
But Berbice likes it long,
And Berbice likes it strong
And often, which really is nice ! "

Doctor Hackett was the leading medical man, and one of the leaders of society. He used to give excellent dinners, and was the prince of good fellows. One evening I was dining with him alone, and he asked me after dinner to excuse him, as he must go to the public hospital to see a man, one of whose legs he had just taken off. I asked to be allowed to accompany him. When we got to the man's bedside, he turned his head in a drowsy way, and said, "Ow ! Dactah me mind move me, me consent for you take off me leg." The doctor was delighted, and stammered out, "Why, you d—d old fool, your leg has been off hours ago."

Anthony Trollope, in his amusing book *The West Indies and Spanish Main*, says, that in New Amsterdam three people make a crowd. Old Paris Britton's house, at which the novelist stayed, and which he called the best hotel in the West Indies, has long been pulled down. New Amsterdam is more like a Dutch town than an English one. It is certainly, especially of late years, a rather sleepy place. The old capital of Berbice was Fort

Nassau, many miles up the Berbice River. There are a great number of old Dutch tombs scattered about the country; some of the inscriptions on them are curious. On one, which commemorates the death of a man's wife and his two sons all in the same year, instead of the usual consolatory text, the sturdy Mynheer had relieved his sorrow and disgust by the words, "Gott vordamm Berbice" (God d—n Berbice).

When the Governor and Lady Longden went up to Berbice, I was residing in New Amsterdam as junior puisne judge. Of course the expected arrivals caused a flutter amongst the officials, and I was rather amused by their conduct. The morning of the day on which the Governor was expected, I received a visit from the Sheriff of Berbice, who said he had come to consult me as to whether he was not as sheriff the leading official in the county, and ought to be the person to receive the Governor, and give his arm to Lady Longden. I said certainly, no doubt about it. He expressed his gratitude and departed. Shortly afterwards, the Assistant Government Secretary was ushered in, and put the same question. I assured him there could be no doubt that, as he was the head of the executive branch of the Civil Service, he was the leading official. So they were both satisfied, but I was in a dilemma. I saw them, in my mind's eye, both rushing at Lady Longden, and nearly upsetting that charming lady in the eagerness of self-assertion. But, as good luck would have it, I heard that the Governor was

coming overland, and would not arrive at Blairmont Ferry, opposite the town, until about 4 p.m.; whereas Lady Longden was coming by steamer, and would reach New Amsterdam about 3 p.m.; so I wrote to the sheriff and told him the Governor would arrive at Blairmont about 4 p.m., and that he as sheriff of the county, ought to meet him; and I wrote to the Assistant Government Secretary, and told him that Lady Longden would arrive at three, in the steamer, and that he, as the leading official, must meet her, and lead her ashore. And so it came off, and both these great men were satisfied.

Once, in New Amsterdam, at a semi-public dinner, D. M. Gallagher, who was at the time Assistant Government Secretary, returned thanks for the Queen when her health was drunk; so he was promptly dubbed "Prince of Wales," and retained that name for some time. Not long afterwards Gallagher obtained leave of absence, and, on his way to England, he spent a day in Georgetown. Entering the Georgetown Club, he was boisterously greeted by our old friend R. W. Imlach, who slapped him on the back, exclaiming, "So, Gallagher, my boy, you are going home to see your august mamma?"

The lunatic asylum for the colony is located near New Amsterdam, in the old military barracks. It was most excellently managed by Dr. Grieve (afterwards Surgeon-General), who had similar experience in England before he came to the colony. I was conducted on one occasion through



ON THE CORENTYNE RIVER, BRITISH GUIANA.

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the asylum by the worthy doctor, and when we were passing through the women's wards a young, handsome quadroon girl, with long black hair falling down her back, rose from the bed on which she had been listlessly lying, and, advancing to me with rapid steps, threw her arms tight round my neck, and buried her face on my manly bosom with a sigh of relief. I naturally clasped my arm round the fair maiden, wondering what was going to happen next, and casting appealing looks at the doctor. He, unromantic person, seized the girl by the arm, and spoke to her sharply and severely, at which she released her hold, and went back sadly to her couch. The doctor said she was distraught by love betrayed, and perhaps I bore some resemblance to the lost one.

At the extreme east of the colony stretches the Corentyne coast, bordering the river of that name, which divides British Guiana from the Dutch colony of Surinam. At the time I am writing about there was much smuggling across the Corentyne River. Nickèrie, at the mouth of the river on the Dutch coast, was the starting-place for numerous boats laden with gin, brandy, and other contraband goods, which were landed at convenient places on the English territory. Early in the seventies I was staying at Whim with the acting magistrate in charge of that district. One morning when we came downstairs we saw in the gallery a large box painted green. "What is this?" said the beak. "It looks uncommonly like a case of gin," said I. "Dear

me, so it does! Let us see." So, calling for a chopper, he prized open the lid, and there, in innocent repose, stood fifteen flasks of gin. "Really, it looks like gin," said his worship; "but"—with a twinkle in his eye—"you cannot be certain unless you taste it." So a flask was uncorked, and we both sampled the liquor, which turned out to be gin, and very good gin too. "It must have been left here by mistake. I never ordered any gin. However, we must keep it for the owner, whoever he is." So the case was securely locked up in the storeroom. In the evening we went out to shoot pigeons. Returning in the dusk, a man stopped our waggon, and, speaking to the magistrate, said, "I hope you got the box of dried fish all right, sir." "Oh, it's you who sent the fish? Yes; it came all right, and" —slipping a five-dollar note into the man's hand— "I hope you will be able to catch some more." The man took the money, smiled, touched his hat, and disappeared.

It is a wonder that there is not more smuggling, considering the difference in price of smuggled and duty-paid spirits. Drink is in itself so cheap. There is whisky sold now in Demerara at $6.50 and $7 a case of twelve quarts. The duty is about $3 a case, so that only leaves $3.50 or $4 to pay for the bottles, corks, cases, packing, straws, drawing, bottling, porterage, railway charges, ship freight, tonnage, harbour dues, etc. What can be the original price of the whisky, if it is to pay any profit to the seller? Good Demerara

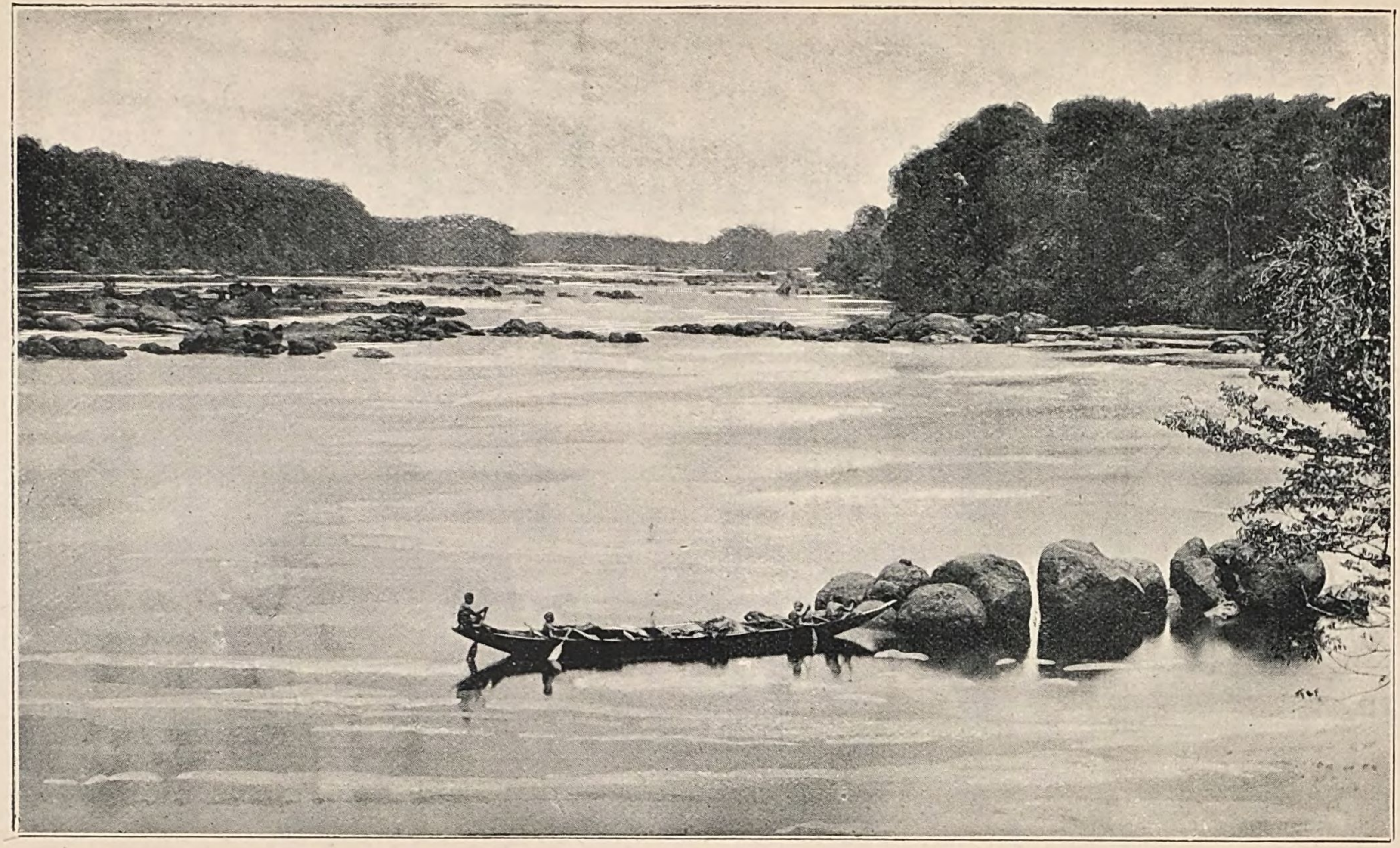
rum is quoted in London at 1*s.* a gallon, *i.e.* 2*s.* for a dozen reputed quarts. The duty on this is 28*s.*, and your wine-merchant puts on 6*s.* for his profit, so you pay 36*s.* for what is not worth 2*s.*; for the wine-merchant buys the rum at 38° over proof, and, with hot water, reduces it to 20° under proof, thereby almost doubling its volume by reducing its strength.

Up the Corentyne River, at a creek called Sisters, used to be the best shooting-ground for Muscovy ducks. On one occasion there were four of us shooting in the creek, one of whom was Dr. Hackett. We were gliding slowly and noiselessly down the creek, two in each corial, looking out for the birds. The doctor, to obtain a better range, had perched himself on a gin-case, which he had balanced in the prow of the corial. Two fine ducks came down the creek over our heads; the doctor fired his first barrel as they were coming towards him, missed, and, to get a second shot, threw himself back to get well in front of the birds. This action dislodged the gin-case, and, to our horror, the doctor went heels over head into the creek, his gun exploding as he went over. He soon reappeared at the surface, spluttering and cursing, but still holding on to his gun; but we could hardly drag him out for laughter.

In the olden days, when our staple industry was prosperous, and a good sugar estate "yielded an earl's income," money was spent in greater profusion than nowadays, and hospitality flourished

exceedingly. When the elections to our local Parliament took place, it was customary for the candidates to send champagne to the returning-officer for the refreshment of their supporters. When I was Sheriff of Essequibo and, consequently, returning-officer for the county, I enjoyed a contested election—it was a break in the monotony of my work, and, as each candidate sent me a case of champagne, it was an agreeable ceremony. The supporters of the candidates, who collected on the nomination day, rarely exceeded twenty, and, as the nomination took place at nine a.m., they never drank more than four or five bottles of champagne, so I carried the remainder home in my waggon. When Dare and Halliday contested the seat in Essequibo, we not only got our champagne, but the latter gentleman brought a special steamer from Georgetown to Suddie, and entertained on board a number of his friends and supporters with a sumptuous luncheon. The champagne and luncheon so inspired two ardent supporters of Halliday, that, invading his house, they carried off to the poll an old bed-ridden gentleman residing at Plantation Johanna Cecilia, and made him record his vote for their candidate, with the result that the old man died the next day. As his relations and heirs were glad to be rid of him, nothing was said about it, and it only came to my ears some time afterwards.

A country auction sale—a vendue, as it was called—was one of the pleasant customs almost



THE THOUSAND ISLES, CORENTYNE RIVER.

[*To face p.* 200.

peculiar to the colony. When a manager of an estate was leaving the colony or removing to another part of the country, he held an auction sale of all his effects—furniture, plate, glass, china, horses, carriages, cattle, pigs, poultry, plants, ferns, etc. This was advertised in the local newspapers for some time; the auctioneer also sent reminders to those of the manager's friends whom he thought were most likely to purchase. On the day of the sale, if the manager were a popular man, all the officials, managers, clergy, and overseers within twenty miles would assemble at the place of sale. If it was a large affair, a special steamer or a special train would bring a large contingent from Georgetown. The compound around the house would be filled with waggons, dog-carts, and every kind of vehicle. The public would begin to arrive about ten a.m., and would pour in for hours. At eleven o'clock the auctioneer would lead the way into a large room specially prepared, where was spread out a splendid cold breakfast, to which the guests sat down. Turkeys, hams, rounds of beef and saddles of mutton, mayonnaise of salmon and crab-backs quickly disappeared, washed down by beer, champagne, whisky, and soda.

Primed by this good cheer, and wishing to help so hospitable a host, the purchasers were very brisk in their bids, and the auction proved a great success. In friendly rivalry, and with much chaff, men would bid against one another, in many instances not knowing what they were buying; and roars of laughter would greet an

ardent bidder when he was found to have purchased for twenty dollars a little cruet-stand worth five shillings. Brandy, whisky, and soda were freely circulated all day; cigars were presented to all his personal friends by the genial host, who moved about amongst the crowd, receiving friendly greetings from all. The early tropical night would have begun to close in upon the scene before the last lot was disposed of and the excited buyers on their way home, sometimes, it must be confessed, driving in a somewhat eccentric manner, and retaining no recollection of what they had bought. A list of their purchases arrived next morning from the auctioneer, when they wondered how they could have made such fools of themselves as to buy a lot of things which they didn't want at extravagant prices.

In going backwards and forwards to my official duties in British Guiana, I have crossed the Atlantic fourteen times. None of these voyages have presented any features of interest. I have never been wrecked, nor have our ships suffered from severe gales or fire. One voyage, however, was somewhat memorable, and deserves a short notice. In April, 1878, I was going home on leave; but when we arrived at Barbados we were informed that the ocean steamer *Tasmanian*, in which we were to cross the Atlantic, had been wrecked at Ponts, in Puerto Rico, and that we must either wait for the next mail or go home in the *Tiber*, which was a small inter-colonial steamer. Many of the passengers, and most of

the ladies, went ashore, but I decided to go on, so was transhipped to the *Tiber*, which sailed in a few hours for St. Lucia, there to await the passengers and crew of the wrecked vessel. We remained three days in St. Lucia. There were no troops there in those days, and it was a dreary spot socially, but the island itself was one of the most beautiful in the West Indies. We found a few ponies, and on these rode up and down the rough mountain roads; we explored the inns and stores of Castries; held smoking concerts in the public square; and, I fear, scandalized the respectable inhabitants by our noisy conduct. At last the *Arno* arrived, bringing the passengers and stores from the *Tasmanian*. The transfer to the *Tiber* was made as quickly as possible, and we were soon under way. The ship was crowded: the holds and cabins and decks were crammed with coal, stores, passengers, and stewards; even the spar-deck was cumbered with barrels of beer and soda-water, and it was well for us that we had fine weather, as we were not in a condition to face a storm. As to the passengers, every cabin was full up; those who could not get berths slept on sofas, under tables, anywhere they could find a place. I was in a small cabin in the fore saloon, with old Dr. Henery, and Keighley, of the 2nd West Indian Regiment. A number of wild young men had joined us from the *Tasmanian*; young coffee-planters from Costa Rica, and gold-diggers from Mexico. One man, who had been collecting orchids in Guatemala for a London nurseryman,

was nicknamed "Roots;" another good-looking, rakish fellow was called "Charcoal," from the refrain of a comic song which he was fond of singing. A jovial young fellow, who was lame and used crutches, received the soubriquet of "Quadruped." Dr. Henery, emerging on deck in the morning, was immediately hailed as "Beaconsfield," owing to his resemblance to that eminent statesman. Keighley was a wild devil, fond of practical jokes, so it was not long before he tried them on, with the usual results. "Roots" had a large garden syringe, so, wishing to pay off Keighley, he stole quietly into our cabin one night, and discharged the syringe full of dirty water into, as he thought, Keighley's ear, as he lay in his bunk; but in the dim light he had made a mistake, and poor Dr. Henery was the recipient of his favours. The Doctor's shouts woke up Keighley and myself, and we sallied out with sticks to get at "Roots," but starting into the fore saloon, we fell over and into a lot of men sleeping on the deck, who received us with blows and curses, and a general *mêlée* ensued. These rows occurred every night, until one exasperated traveller brought out a revolver, and, loading it before our eyes, said he should begin shooting if he were disturbed again. The captain got alarmed, and stationed two armed quarter-masters in the saloon every night. "Roots" and "Charcoal" had their grog stopped at the bar, and our nights were afterwards not often disturbed.

Of course, we had two breakfasts and two

dinners. Keighley and I dined at the first dinner, and there was a crusty old gentleman in the second detachment who used to come to the top of the companion as we were cracking our nuts and enjoying a glass of port after dinner, and make audible remarks about keeping the table so long—"Guzzling fellows," and such like. We didn't like this, so we marked down the old gentleman to his lair at night, which we found was under one of the dining-saloon tables; so one night, when the old gentleman was snoring under his table, lying on his back, "Roots," Keighley, and Co. lashed his arms and legs to the table-legs with the dinner napkins. Wanting to turn in his sleep, he couldn't move, and waking up, he began to roar at the top of his voice, till every one rushed into the saloon to see what was the matter. Despite these, and various other amusements, it was an uncomfortable voyage, and we were all glad when we anchored inside Plymouth breakwater.

CHAPTER IX.

Emancipation—Immigration schemes—East Indians—Chinese—Dangerous characters—The coolie—Invested savings—Mowla Buksh—Chan-a-fook—The burglar and murderer—Execution of Chinese at Suddie—Christian Chinese—Their honesty and sincerity—Opium-smoking—Gambling—Settlement—Camounie Creek—Queer dishes—Chinese immigrants ex "Corona"—Similarity of appearance—Concubines—Suicides—East Indian immigrants—Scarcity of women—Difficulty in obtaining wives—Polyandry—Purchase of wives—Girl or cow—Adultery—Frequent murders—Case of Seecharam—Mutilation and murder of his wife—Execution of Seecharam—Transmigration of souls—Indian superstitions—Marriage at Aurora—Tragic results.

After the abolition of slavery it was found impossible to carry on the cultivation of sugar estates in the West Indies and British Guiana without a steady and reliable supply of labour. The slaves, being free, understood freedom to mean that they need not work any more, and, as tropical conditions impose no very severe penalties on the idle, such as quickly overtake them in countries where labour is abundant and where there is a winter to face, they were able to persist in their views of the privileges of freedom. So the colonists were driven to import labour from afar, which laid the foundation for the present scheme of East Indian immigration, which has proved to be of equal benefit to the planters and the immigrants

themselves. Owing to various causes, the supply of Indian immigrants was fluctuating, so the planters, considering it were wise to have two strings to their bow, advised the Government to open an agency in China for the introduction of Chinese immigrants. Unfortunately, owing to the duplicity of the Chinese Government and the rascality of the native sub-agents, instead of agricultural labourers, the emigrant ships were in many cases filled up in part with the offscourings of Canton—gaol-birds, sturdy beggars, loafers, and vagabonds. These, when they arrived in the colony, and had been allotted to estates, showed no inclination for sustained toil in the fields, and nearly all of them deserted after a few months' experience. Some joined a community of their countrymen, who had settled on one of the numerous creeks up the Demerara River; others took to peddling, rum-smuggling, illicit distillation, keeping gambling-houses and brothels; whilst the worst amongst them returned to their former occupations of burglary, robbery, and petty larceny. As these last were powerful ruffians, and always carried a large, sharp, two-edged knife, which they never scrupled to use to avoid capture, it may well be supposed that they were a terror to all law-abiding citizens. Several cases of robbery, burglary and attempted murder, perpetrated by Chinese, came under my immediate notice when I was first appointed as a stipendiary magistrate in Guiana. The most serious of them all occurred on an estate situated on the east bank of the river Demerara.

The Indian immigrants by honest labour amass a considerable amount of money. The coolie, as he is called in the colony, unlike a European, never wastes his acquired wealth in clothes, houses, horses, carriages, and servants; he remains in the same wattle and daub hut, clothes—or rather, does not clothe—himself in the same solitary garment, a rather dirty dhooti, or loin-cloth, and eats the same boiled rice and vegetable curry as beforetime; but he buys cows, which are a remunerative investment for his capital, and he loads his wives with about a hundredweight of silver bangles, armlets, foot-rings, nose-rings, and necklaces, till one feels surprised how the pretty little women—for most of them are 4 ft. 8 in. or 4 ft. 10 in. in height—can walk along under such a burden. For himself he buys sovereigns at the bank, and, sending for a native goldsmith, he keeps him at his hut and under his eyes whilst the cunning man turns the sovereigns into large gold beads, a whole string of which he fastens securely with a strong cord round his shapely neck. This he wears day and night. I have frequently seen coolies working in a cane piece entirely naked, except for a turban and dhooti, and a string of gold beads or sovereigns round their necks.

Mowla Buksh was a driver on Plantation Peter's Hall, an estate on the east bank. He had been fourteen years on the same place, and had lately risen to his present responsible position. He was a well-to-do man, so his wife was weighted with jewelry when she went to town or to the

races; and he himself wore at all times round his neck a splendid necklace of gold coins, the centre-piece being an American twenty-dollar gold eagle. The sight of this shining in the sun when Mowla went to work had excited the cupidity of Chan-a-fook, a Chinese pedlar, petty thief and occasional burglar, who used to perambulate the district on his cheating and nefarious transactions. One night Mowla Buksh was asleep on his charpoy, his wife was lying upon another in the same hut, when the door was deftly opened by Chan-a-fook, whose burglarious knowledge was more than a match for the simple fastenings of the coolie's hut. He softly, with cat-like steps on hands and feet, made his way to the Indian's bed. He was entirely naked, except for a cloth round his middle, in which he carried his long, sharp, two-edged knife. Raising himself gently up as he approached the charpoy, and guided by the even breathing of the sleeper, he placed his left hand to the coolie's throat, and, withdrawing his knife from its sheath, he attempted cautiously to sever the string which supported the necklace round the Indian's neck. Whether the string was stronger than he expected, and more force had to be used, or from some other cause, Mowla Buksh awoke, to find the cold steel of the knife against his throat trying to cut through the string of his necklace. With a shout he sprang up. The Chinaman hastily retreated by the open door. Seizing his hackia-stick, and shouting "Chûr! chûr!" ("Thief! thief!") as loud as he could, Mowla Buksh rushed after him. The noise

and shouting roused the other sleeping coolies in the range, and a dozen men turned out in pursuit; but Mowla Buksh was some way ahead, and gaining rapidly on the Chinaman. The latter, when he found himself in danger of being overtaken and captured, turned sharply round upon his pursuer and, dodging the blow which Mowla aimed at him with his stick, plunged his great knife into the coolie's chest. With a groan, the unhappy man fell back on the ground, whilst Chan-a-fook, drawing out the knife, resumed his flight before the rest of the pursuers could reach him. The sight of their wounded comrade roused the remaining pursuers to fresh exertions, and they soon came up with the Chinaman, who was getting blown; but the first up repented of his rashness, for, as he attempted to put his hand on the man's shoulder, he shared the same fate as Mowla Buksh, and fell back mortally wounded.

This made the other men more cautious, so with their long hackia-sticks they beat the Chinaman to the ground, but not before he had inflicted several nasty wounds with his razor-edged knife upon their naked bodies. In their rage they continued to beat the now senseless Chinaman, and it is a wonder the man was not killed there and then; but some one in authority came up, and by his instructions the Chinaman and his victims were all conveyed to the Estate's hospital.

As the magistrate of the district, I was quickly informed of the occurrence, and drove up at daybreak to take the depositions of the two stabbed

men, who were not expected to live long. It was well I went at once, as poor Mowla Buksh and his companion in misfortune died shortly afterwards, having identified the Chinaman as the one who had killed them. The other men who were injured soon recovered, as they had only received flesh wounds, which were not serious. The wretched Chinaman himself had several bones broken, and had been beaten to a jelly, and it was some months before he was able to appear in court to answer the charges of murder and burglary preferred against him; but eventually I took the depositions and he was committed for trial. He was convicted at the next session of the Supreme Criminal Court, was sentenced to death, and executed in due course.

I once presided over the execution of a China-man in Essequibo, when I was sheriff there. He was not as stolid as is the custom of his race, but as we went to the scaffold, poured out a torrent of Chinese in a loud and excited voice. Thinking he might be making some request or prayer, I asked the interpreter what he was saying. The man seemed rather embarrassed, but as I pressed for an answer, he replied, "Oh, nothing, sir; he is only cursing you and the judge." And he went on cursing to the last; even when the rope was round his neck, and the cap dragged over his face, I could hear his mutterings in the strange Chinese language, half smothered by the white cloth mask, until the tightening of the rope, as he sank down the fatal drop, put an end to his curses for ever.

As I have given an account of a bad China-

man, I think it is only fair to say that the present Chinese inhabitants of British Guiana are most worthy, law-abiding people, giving little trouble to police or magistrate; industrious, truthful, and honest, they make most excellent citizens. A Chinaman will try to overreach you in making a bargain, but once the bargain is made he will always stick to it with the utmost fidelity. Many of the Chinese have become Christians, and excellent converts they are. They have built and maintain churches of their own in Georgetown and New Amsterdam, pay their own catechists, and are always ready to subscribe to any Christian charity. I am no great believer in missionary enterprise; I am sure every honest Christian in the colony will confess that the attempt to convert the Hindoo and Mahommedan immigrants to Christianity has been an utter failure. But although a captious critic, I am bound to confess that the Chinese converts are, in my opinion, earnest, believing Christians. It is true that the Chinese have several vices, but they are not worse than those common to Europeans—opium-smoking is one, and there are opium dens in Georgetown; but I doubt whether opium-smoking, unless it is indulged in to excess, is more injurious than tobacco-smoking, and certainly not half as injurious as excessive drinking, not even to the man himself, and what a difference to the community! More than half our crime is traceable to the influence of drink, but who ever heard of a man who committed a crime under the influence of opium?



CHINESE DOCTOR, GEORGETOWN.



CHINESE IMMIGRANT AND HIS WIFE,
BRITISH GUIANA.

[*To face p.* 212.

The smoking of ganjè, or bhang, is a different matter: under its influence a man goes raging mad, and is liable to commit the most frightful atrocities.

Gambling is another of their vices, and one which it is impossible to eradicate. A Chinaman, when once inoculated with this disease—for I can call it nothing else—will stake everything. I knew of one case, where a man lost all his money, then his house and furniture, then his wife, and then he staked himself as a slave for six months and lost that, and, strange to say, he faithfully worked out his debt of honour, toiling for his master without wages for the allotted time, and then began life afresh, a saddened and, let us hope, a wiser man.

I dined and slept at the house of a Chinese gentleman, up the Camounie Creek on the Demerara River, one night in the seventies. He was a pleasant, jovial person, and as he understood some English we were able to converse together. He gave me an excellent dinner—tannia soup, roast capon, cold tea, and excellent brandy (Hennessy's XXX). His wife was a jolly, moon-faced woman, with enormous jade earrings, and his children were as fat as butter. Thanking him for his hospitality, I expressed a wish that next time I dined with him young roast dog might be one of the dishes. He seemed rather angry at the suggestion. "No good Chinee eat bow-wow; bad Chineeman, he eat bow-wow."

One gets accustomed to queer dishes in the bush. On one occasion, dining with a Chinaman,

we had a peculiar sauce with our fish; it was like clear melted butter, flavoured with some pungent herb. On inquiry I found it was an oil made by melting down the fat which lies like blubber between the skin and flesh of the great water camoudie, or python, which is so common in the South American rivers. There are several descriptions of python, boa-constrictor, or camoudie, as they are called. They are all very beautiful; one called the iridescent camoudie is a perfect rainbow of colour.

Armadillo is very good eating; you bake him like a hedgehog in his shell, which drops off when the meat is cooked. Parrots and macaws make excellent soup. The large caterpillars, called groogroo worms because they are usually found in the groogroo palms, are much relished by some people, but I cannot say I like them. Jaguar steaks are eatable, and tapir and capybara make excellent pepper-pot. Monkeys are also very good eating, but I never could stomach them; they are too human. Their flesh becomes quite white when boiled or stewed, and to see a small white hand dragged out of the pot by a fork is too suggestive of cannibalism to be pleasant.

One of the last ship-loads of Chinese landed in the colony came in the *Corona*. They, like many of their predecessors, were mostly loafers picked up in the great Chinese cities, not many of them being agriculturists. They were well dressed and self-satisfied, always laughing and talking. They paraded Georgetown like Cook's tourists; they travelled over it from end to end; they climbed

to the top of its highest buildings the better to enjoy the scenery; they inspected the stores, the churches, the public buildings. They patronized the cabs to a liberal extent, as many as ten of them airing themselves in one vehicle at the same time. They chaffed the lower classes, and, with the greatest *bonhomie*, condescended to shake hands with some gentlemen whose appearance met with their approval. They took over the Governor's fish-pond at Kingston, opened the sluices, drained off the water, and then wading in, amused themselves by catching the fish out of the mud, all the time with the greatest hilarity, and with uproarious laughter. They celebrated their safe arrival in the colony by a series of theatrical entertainments given under the portico of the Immigration Office. Some of them walked into my house, took up the ornaments and photographs on the tables, and inspected the plate on the sideboard; all the time talking in loud voices, and roaring with laughter. Meeting my little boy, Arnold, a child of four, in the street, one of them picked him up and carried him for some distance on his shoulders, to the amusement of his comrades, and the terror of the boy's nurse. Only one thing amazed them, and that was a locomotive engine, and it they worshipped as a god.

Mr. Crosby, the Immigration Agent-General, was at his wits' end, and, as his custom was, blessed his soul all day. At last the men were allotted to different estates and sent out of town, but very few of them became steady labourers.

The Chinese are so much alike in features that it is very difficult to distinguish one man from another; so when they deserted from estates it was difficult to identify and arrest them. As I have said, there was a Chinese settlement on the Camounie Creek, opposite Hyde Park Police Station, on the Demerara River, where there is a church and a catechist. Deserters from estates frequently make their way to this settlement, and it would be a bold policeman who would attempt to execute a warrant in its midst. The Chinese, as a rule, work hard and live well; unlike the East Indian, they mingle freely with the black and coloured races. As Chinese women are scarce, the Chinaman has always a coloured woman as a concubine; and they generally manage to get the best-looking girls in the place. The negro population, who make a butt of the patient Hindoo and bully his life out of him, are afraid of the Chinaman, and leave him alone. The heathen Chinee is, as a rule, a melancholy person: he takes life very seriously, he is not enamoured of it, and deprives himself of it with *nonchalance* on the least provocation — any temporary calamity is sufficient to drive him to the fatal act. A new police-station and lock-up was erected at Anna Regina on the Aroabisce Coast in 1878. For the accommodation of the prisoners a wooden bench was placed round the walls of the lock-up. Unfortunately, by standing on the bench, a prisoner could reach with his hands the iron-barred ventilators in the wall, so the first Chinaman who

was imprisoned in the lock-up immediately hanged himself by strips of his torn-up clothing suspended from the bars of the window. I thought this was an isolated case of temporary insanity, but as all the Chinamen who were temporarily incarcerated in the same place despatched themselves in the same way, it was thought desirable to remove that part of the bench which was under the barred windows. After its removal no more suicides took place.

Amongst the East Indian immigrants introduced into British Guiana the percentage of women is small; there are, on an average, not more than thirty-five women to every hundred men, so it is impossible to provide each man with a wife. There is great difficulty in persuading women to emigrate from India. Perhaps I am wrong in this, as women in India have little chance of exercising their own will in the matter. I ought to have said that the male relations of a woman wishing to emigrate will do everything in their power to prevent her from doing so. In order, therefore, to procure enough women to make up the complement of a ship, the emigration agents in Calcutta are compelled to ship a number of women recruited from the bazaars, and not of good character. When landed in British Guiana, the Indian coolie, unless he has brought a wife with him, or has persuaded a female on board ship to live with him when he arrives, has very small chance of getting a wife until he has worked for some years and amassed sufficient money to enable him to purchase the

daughter of a fellow-countryman who is blessed with a family. Owing to the scarcity of females, polyandry is often practised, three or four men living with one woman in apparent contentment.

It can well be imagined on a large sugar estate where there are seven or eight hundred East Indians, most of whom are young men, that the husband of an attractive young wife has not a very easy life. Every inducement of love and money is tried to seduce the girl (for she is often only fourteen or fifteen years of age) to leave her husband, or, at any rate, to listen with acquiescence to the tales of love poured into her ears. So a jealous husband has a miserable life. He can never trust his wife out of his sight; when he goes to work he takes her with him, or else leaves her in charge of his mother or some female relative who watches her all day. It must be remembered that with most married couples no love had preceded the marriage ceremony; a young girl of ten or twelve years of age is sold to a man like a sheep without asking her consent, so no affection for her spouse can prevent her from dishonouring him.

An amusing incident occurred once in court, which throws some light on coolie marriages. A little East Indian girl was giving her evidence about the defendant, who had recently proposed marriage to her under peculiar circumstances. The girl's mother owed defendant a debt, in settlement of which he wanted her cow. But he also wanted the woman's daughter, and proposed for her hand, on condition the cow went as dowry.

"'"No,' said me mudder, 'you can take de gal and leff de cow, no so take de cow, and leff de gal.'" Here the little maiden became excited, and with raised voice informed the Court—"And belieb me, Sah, de beast leff me wid me mudder, and took de cow."

It is no wonder that a loveless marriage often leads to adultery, and adultery too frequently leads to murder. In European countries the rage of the injured husband is usually directed against the man who has dishonoured his bed and wrecked his home. In the earlier days he would kill him when he met him, or hire an assassin to murder him. Later on in social history he used to parade him at 7 a.m. and shoot him, or be shot himself. Now he tries to cast him for heavy damages in the Divorce Court. But the Asiatic looks upon his wife as the chief offender. If he be a Turk, he ties her up in a sack and sinks her in the sea; if a Hindoo, he mutilates her by chopping off her nose, breasts, or arms, and if in a violent rage, hacks her to pieces with his cutlass. These violent assaults and murders are, unfortunately, very common in Demerara, and I can remember many cases which came under my immediate cognizance.

On one of the largest and best-managed sugar estates on the east bank of the Demerara River there lived an East Indian immigrant named Seecharam. He was a well-to-do man, was the proud possessor of three cows; buried under the floor of his hut were a numerous assortment of

bangles, nose-jewels, earrings, and necklaces, such as charm the female mind. He had also an account in three figures of dollars in the Government Savings Bank.

The wife he had brought with him from the old country was dead, and being still a year on the right side of fifty, he was anxious to procure a successor. It was not long before his choice fell upon Etwarrea, a pretty little Indian girl born in the colony of wealthy parents. She was eleven years of age, so there was nothing to delay the marriage if Seecharam could gain the consent of the father. So the expectant bridegroom gave a big dinner and invited Etwarrea's father; and after dinner, when the stomach was full and the heart soft, and the blue smoke from their hubble-bubbles was curling round their heads, Seecharam opened his heart to the girl's father, and demanded his daughter in marriage. The wily old man appeared astonished, and said that he had already promised his daughter; but when pressed to name the favoured one he prevaricated, and Seecharam saw he was only trying to gain time. However, the father kept on extolling his daughter's charms, and the number of her suitors, so that no arrangement could be arrived at that night. After some days' arguing and bargaining, Seecharam agreed to give the father a cow and a calf, fifty dollars in hard cash, and he was to make a will leaving his future wife, and any children she might have by him, all the remainder of his property. After these preliminaries had been satisfactorily arranged

the girl was introduced to her future husband, and a short time afterwards their nuptials were celebrated with all the usual feasting and tom-toming.

At first everything went smoothly; the little bride settled down to her wifely duties. Her husband was generally kind to her, although he sometimes gave her a good whack with his stick when he came home from work, and found she had been making mud-pies in the road instead of cooking his rice for dinner. His first wife's mother, who lived with them, was a strict duenna, but she didn't ill-use the child, and altogether Etwarrea's lot was better than that of most East Indian wives.

But when the young wife became fifteen or sixteen years of age, when her figure had attained its full development—and a lovely little figure it was, too—she began to lend a willing ear to the blandishments of several young men who were anxious to supplant the somewhat aged husband. Scandalous reports about Etwarrea began to be spread, and came to her husband's ears. He said nothing at first, but at last he accused her of infidelity, and as she did not give satisfactory answers, he gave her a severe beating, and locked her up in his room when he went out to his work. The old woman overwhelmed her with reproaches, and altogether poor little Etwarrea was in a bad way. Her affection for her husband was not increased by such treatment, and she consoled herself whenever she dared in the society of the most favoured of her lovers.

At last her husband's patience was exhausted: he had become convinced that his wife was a faithless woman; he became moody and silent, always brooding over his wrongs. He hardly ever spoke to his wife now, and people who knew the ways of his race watched for what he would do next.

One morning Seecharam refused to go to work when the driver came round to turn out the shovel-gang. As he was usually a good and steady worker, the overseer left him alone. When the people had all gone to work, and the nigger yard was almost deserted, Seecharam took his cutlass, or machete, a heavy iron weapon with which canes are cut, and proceeded to sharpen it at the grindstone. Two women saw him doing this, muttering to himself all the while; so, scenting mischief, they went to the range of coolie-rooms, in the gallery of which Etwarrea was sitting sewing, and warned her: "Etwarrea, look to thyself; Seecharam is sharpening his cutlass, his face is hard, and he is talking in his beard." But she only laughed and said, "Never mind what the old fool does; let him sharpen his wits as well as his cutlass." So they left her, and went after their own business. In the mean while, Seecharam continued to sharpen his cutlass, feeling the edge with his fingers, until at length he was satisfied with its keenness; then he marched off to his own room, and sat down not far from his wife. She looked up at him and said, "Seecharam, why are you not at work? The manager sahib will

summons you before the magistrate sahib." But he said nothing. Etwarrea looked at him, and then at the gleaming cutlass, and a great fear entered into her soul. She had never seen him look like that before. Her conscience told her she had been very indiscreet, and she had heard of the vengeance which an Indian husband sometimes wreaks on his faithless wife; so she quietly rose up, with the intention of slipping away and joining some other men and women who were sitting in the gallery of an adjacent range. But ere she had made six strides from her place her husband was after her, and seized her by the right hand with his left. She shrieked aloud as the dreaded cutlass descended with two sharp chops upon her pretty rounded arm, severing it completely from her body just below the elbow. Seecharam flung the bleeding limb into her face as she fled from him, shouting out, "Harlot! adulteress! take that!" The unfortunate woman ran on, shrieking and bleeding, till she sank down on the ground, the blood pouring from her severed arteries. Seecharam, returning to his house, threw the bloody cutlass into the room, took his shovel, locked the door, and went out to his work aback of the estate.

The injured woman was carried to the hospital on the plantation, where every care was taken of her. The district medical officer was sent for, and he found it was necessary to amputate the arm above the elbow. The poor girl had lost so much blood, and the shock to her system was so great,

that it was evident she had not long to live. The magistrate of the district in which this happened was sent for to take her dying deposition.

Seecharam had been arrested, and was confronted with his victim; he seemed quite indifferent and callous, and showed no sign of emotion.

Etwarrea died within two days of the assault upon her, and Seecharam was committed for trial at the next sessions of the Supreme Criminal Court to be held in Georgetown. The evidence was so clear against him at the trial that his conviction followed as a matter of course, and the date of his execution was fixed.

The Governor in Council refused to interfere with his sentence, so, as Sheriff of the County, I received the Governor's warrant for the execution of the wretched man. I went to see him the day before he was executed, and told him that he would be hanged at 9 a.m. the next day, and asked him if I could do anything for him—write to his relations in India, or see about his property in the colony. No; he said he didn't want anything. I asked him if he would like to see a priest, or Brahmin. "No," he replied; "the chaplain of the prison was very kind to him, and showed him some pretty pictures." He seemed so calm and self-possessed that I asked him what he expected would happen to him when he died. He thought for a few moments, and then said that he believed he should become a mule. "For how long would you be a mule?" "Well, I don't know. For some years." "And what will become

of you then?" "Oh, then," he replied, "I shall become a woman." I thought he must be joking, but he spoke quite seriously, and with an air of conviction.

The next morning, punctually at 9 o'clock, I read the death-warrant to him. He was quite calm, walked quietly on to the fatal drop, and, as his legs were strapped and the cord and cap adjusted, not a tremor could be seen to pass over his frame; life or death seemed to him a matter of perfect indifference. I gave the signal, the drop down fell with a loud clanging noise, and Seecharam had solved the great mystery, and would soon know whether his belief in the transmigration of souls was founded on truth or falsehood.

The mild Hindoo is generally worthy of his epithet, but when his passions are roused he becomes violently excited, and is then a dangerous person. He is very superstitious, believes in charms, witches, the evil eye, the turned-down thumb, and all the other absurdities which have at different times enslaved all nations.

A curious and what might have turned out a tragic effect of superstition came under my notice in 1880, when I was Sheriff of Essequibo. It happened at Plantation Aurora, at the southern part of the Aroabisce coast, on the occasion of the marriage of two East Indians.

Gocool was celebrating the wedding of his eldest son with the daughter of a Hindoo shopkeeper from the island of Wakenaam, which lies

in the estuary of the Essequibo River. The sweetmeats had all been prepared, the cakes made, the tom-toms had been tightened, and all the paraphernalia of a Hindoo wedding were in readiness. The bridegroom was a fine, handsome, well-grown boy of about thirteen years of age; the bride was a lovely little woman of ten, with the tiniest feet and hands, brilliant black eyes, long lashes, and flowing black tresses, which for the first time were curled up behind her pretty little head. The festivities would last during the inside of a week. On Monday the bride's procession came in boats from Wakenaam, and were met by the bridegroom's friends firing guns, discharging crackers, and beating tom-toms, and was conveyed to the house prepared for her. The night was devoted to feasting, but the tired children who were to be married the next day were soon fast asleep.

The morning of the wedding-day was fine and hot; before the sun rose the noisy tom-toms informed the world of what was astir. The bridegroom sprang from his charpoy, and rushed out into the warm air, bathing his nude body in the beams of the rising sun. As luck would have it, an old she-goat, with its kid, had wandered into his father's compound, and was nibbling at the vegetables and flowers growing therein, so young Ramlall, as the boy was called, amused himself by hunting the beasts out of the place. He was enjoying this sport, and had pitched a piece of firewood and struck the kid on the leg, causing it to limp grievously, when an old crone, the

owner of the goats, came upon the scene, and, with frightful objurgations, proceeded to rescue her property. When she saw the kid was lame she cursed Ramlall in a way peculiar to her race, which is most prolific in curses. She hoped his marriage would be unhappy and his bed unfruitful; if he had children, they would have seven fathers; that his wife would be a wh——, etc. Commend me to an East Indian woman for a foul tongue! The neighbours ran out and rebuked the woman, who departed, muttering curses as she went.

The boy was much excited by chasing the goats and by the curses he had received, and proceeded, as many boys will, to relieve his feelings by further exercise. With some other boys he ran about racing and shouting, jumping and playing all kinds of fantastic tricks, whilst the elders looked on, thinking how he had best enjoy himself now, so soon to be undergoing the responsibilities of the married state. Whether it was the unusual excitement or the extra exertion which caused it cannot now be said—perhaps both causes combined—but of a sudden the boy bridegroom fell down flat on his face, and either died at once, or within a few minutes after his fall.

It would be impossible to depict the consternation and rage which filled the hearts of the boy's relations and friends when they became aware of what had happened. They bore the child into his father's house, and laid him on the bed; they chafed his hands, poured cold water on his face;

called on God with loud cries and gesticulations; but still as death lay the boy—in fact, he was quite dead. But they could not believe it: he must be bewitched; and then the curses of the old woman recurred to their minds, and some cried out, "He is possessed of an evil spirit; that foul witch hath bewitched him!" and cries of anger burst from the crowd, which had collected as news of the boy's death got bruited abroad. "Bring the old hag here, and make her fetch him back to life." A dozen men rushed off to the old woman's hut, and, despite her cries and struggles, dragged her by her arms and hair to the room where the boy lay on his back, unclothed except for the string of beads round his neck, and the sacred thread round his loins. In a moment the infuriated relatives had stripped the wretched old woman stark naked, and laid her face downwards on the top of the boy, and then proceeded to lash her over the back, buttocks, and legs with canes, rods, and leathern straps, calling upon her to bring the child back to life again, and remove the curse she had laid upon him. Needless to say, the boy gave no sign of life. The woman screamed at the top of her voice, shrieking for mercy, but her tormentors were inexorable: the flogging went on till the poor woman's voice grew weaker and weaker, and soon there would have been another corpse on the top of the first.

But succour was at hand; one of the overseers of the estate, hearing the shrieks, came to see what was being done, and seeing the infuriated mob

beating the old woman to death, he called a dozen stout negroes, and conveyed the poor creature to the police-station, more dead than alive, and locked her up there for safety. Baulked of their prey, the enraged Hindoos rushed out and spread abroad their tale of woe and bereavement. Sympathy with their wrongs was soon aroused in the breasts of their countrymen, and about a hundred coolies, armed with hackia-sticks, marched to the police-station, and demanded that the woman should be given up.

The manager of the estate became alarmed, and telegraphed to me to come up, as he expected there would be a riot, and the police-station destroyed. At the same time the Sergeant of Police in charge of Aurora station telegraphed to headquarters for reinforcements. A few minutes after the receipt of the telegram I was on my way to Aurora, leaving orders for twenty policemen, armed with Enfield rifles, to be despatched at once. When I arrived at Aurora, I found a great mob of coolies round the police-station, brandishing sticks and shouting out threats and curses. I called to one or two of the leaders whom I knew, and asked them what was the matter. They told me that the woman in the lock-up had bewitched the boy, who was lying in a trance, and that if she did not bring him back to life, they would beat her to death. "But," I said, "are you sure the boy is alive? Perhaps he is dead." No, they were sure he was not dead, he was only bewitched. I went on to the house where the boy was, forcing my

way in with great difficulty, amongst the wailing women and cursing men. "Well," I said, "if he is not dead, let us take him to the hospital at once for the doctor sahib to see him; perhaps he will bring him back to life." To this they agreed, and, hoisting up the cot on their shoulders, six of the men carried him off to the hospital, followed by a mob of about two hundred men, women, and children.

I had already sent for the medical officer belonging to the district, who arrived soon after I got to the hospital. The boy was carried into the mortuary. I drove all the people out, except about six of the principal men, and these I ordered to leave their heavy hackia-sticks outside. I then locked the door, and took out the key. The doctor felt the boy's pulse, sounded his heart, and then said to me in a low voice, "He is quite dead." So I said to the men, "The doctor sahib says he is dead, and nothing can bring him back to life. Don't you believe him?" Some said "Yes," others said "No." So I said to the doctor, "A post-mortem examination must be made for the inquest, which I shall hold over the body, so you may as well make it at once." Calling for the dispenser of the hospital to bring his implements down, the doctor took out his knives, and opened the boy straight up from his groin to his throat, took out the organs and examined them, found the cause of death, which was the rupture of a blood-vessel in or near the heart, which he showed to the men, who were watching his proceedings with disgusted



ACCAWOIO INDIANS, DEMERARA RIVER (*p.* 189).



EAST INDIAN IMMIGRANTS, BRITISH GUIANA (*p.* 217).

[*To face p.* 230.

faces. "Are you satisfied, doctor?" said I. "Quite," replied he. "There is no doubt death was caused by the rupture of this blood-vessel, caused by over-excitement and over-exertion, and his death must have been almost instantaneous." The organs were replaced, and the body stitched up, but still the men said nothing. When this was done, I turned to them and exclaimed, "Well, is the boy dead now?" One of them, who could speak a little English, replied grimly, "Yes, sahib, the doctor sahib kill him good this time." "So the old woman cannot bring him to life now?" This they admitted. "Then," I said, "you had better leave her alone." To this they made no reply, so I unlocked the door, and we all sallied out to meet the crowd outside, who had been anxiously awaiting the result of our conference. It was some days before the excitement subsided sufficiently for me to allow the wretched old woman to be liberated; and then she was removed to the hospital, as the injuries she had received had been a great shock to her system. The pretty little bride, widowed before ever she was a wife, returned with her friends to Wakenaam, and by degrees the men at Aurora returned to work, laid down their sticks and took up their shovels, but to this day I believe most of them maintain that the doctor killed the boy by my orders.

CHAPTER X.

Perjury: in the Divorce Court; generally; amongst Hindoos—Family ties—Caste—Case of Rookminia—Perjury a duty—Her imprisonment—Release—Gratitude—Various races and creeds in British Guiana—Variety of judicial oaths—Curious Chinese oaths—Hindoo belief—Results of education—Names of children, Hindoo, Congo—Bindharry and his pretty daughters—A disappointed lover—Large amount of savings made by coolies—Mootee—Champagne-drinking—Deposit in the Bengal Bank—Hardships of coolies returning to India—Extortion by priests and relatives—Marriage contracts—Consideration money—Baboo English—Marriages between children—Complications—Fatalism—Oriental imagery—"Found dead"—Mortuary.

Perhaps there is no crime more common than perjury. Like smuggling, it is looked upon by many otherwise law-abiding citizens as a venial offence; and, as long as it is committed in a good cause, is regarded not only with indifference, but even with approbation. The judges who have presided in the divorce courts have all commented at different times on the prevalence of perjury in the cases tried before them, and seem even to have accepted the fact that it is useless to make any attempt to remedy the evil. People of high position and stainless character will deliberately lie in the witness-box to shield a woman's character; and we cannot but sympathize with the man in a well-known novel who deliberately

committed perjury to save his innocent friend from a shameful death. All of us who have presided at trials, whether criminal or civil, are painfully aware how unreliable most witnesses are, and how they allow their wishes and predilections to outweigh their love of truth.

If such be the state of morals amongst educated Christian people, it cannot be surprising that amongst nations with other morals and diverse religions speaking the truth on all occasions is not considered incumbent or praiseworthy. Amongst the Hindoos, truthfulness is the exception, not the rule. If you ask a Hindoo of inferior position to your own a question, he answers, not according to the facts of the case, but as he believes you wish him to answer; so he generally equivocates, seldom answering directly, in the hope of gleaning from your words and manner in what way you wish him to reply. Witnesses for a lawsuit can be bought in any number, and are instructed as to what they are to say at the trial with considerable carefulness, and with an eye to cross-examination which is truly remarkable. I have often found that the only way to arrive at the truth in a case between two East Indians, each of whom called numerous witnesses, was to order all witnesses out of court, and then to examine each individually upon some parts of the case which were not directly bearing upon the points at issue, but which often revealed the fact that the witnesses could not possibly have been at the place where they swore they had been. For

instance, if it were a question as to the payment of certain money, all the witnesses would be perfectly prepared, under cross-examination, to say when and where the money was paid, how many persons were present at the time, who they were, in whose house, the exact time by the clock, who wrote and who signed the receipt, and all the other minutiæ of the transaction; but by asking questions for which they have not been prepared, it may often be discovered that it was impossible for the witnesses to have seen all the transactions which they so glibly described.

It is also part of the family religion of the Hindoo that all members of a family should hold together, and should back each other up in all matters before the courts. This especially holds good with regard to the women of the family, who are always held in subjection, and whose sole duty is to obey their husbands, brothers, fathers, fathers-in-law, and mothers-in-law, and to have no opinion of their own in anything.

A remarkable instance came to my knowledge in Essequibo; not that I think the circumstances are unusual, but, having been the cause of both a civil and criminal trial, it came into greater prominence than other similar cases which had been either undiscovered or unnoticed. An East Indian, who was possessed of considerable property in houses and cattle, died on an estate on the Aroabisce coast. He had several children, and, in anticipation of his approaching decease, he gave instructions to the village lawyer for a will

to be drawn up; but before his wishes could be carried out the old man died. Having died without a will, his property would come under the jurisdiction of the Administrator-General, who would take possession of the property, sell it, and divide the proceeds among the heirs-at-law. To avoid this, the eldest son, who lived with his father, obtained the aid of a black man in the neighbourhood who could read and write, and had a document drawn up, purporting to be the last will and testament of his deceased father, in which the bulk of the property was left to himself; he forged his father's signature, dated the paper on the day before his father's death, and obtained witnesses who signed the will, amongst others his sister Rookminia, who lived in the house with her father and brother. However, the forgery was so clumsily done, the document at once exciting suspicion, that probate was refused; the son of the deceased Hindoo was arrested, and, after a full investigation, was committed by me for trial at the Criminal Sessions on a charge of forgery.

At the trial he was ably defended by a coloured barrister from Georgetown, who called witnesses in his defence, amongst others his sister Rookminia. In her evidence Rookminia swore positively that her old father made his mark to the will before he died; that it was read over to him, and that he was aware of its contents; and that the disposal of the property by the will was what he had always intended, and had spoken about it in her presence

before he died. Despite these positive statements of Rookminia and other witnesses, the man was found guilty, and the judge ordered that Rookminia should be arrested, and charged with wilful and corrupt perjury. I conducted the preliminary examination, and the evidence presenting a strong *primâ facie* case against the young woman, who was only eighteen or twenty years of age, married, with two little children, one a baby in arms, she was committed for trial, being admitted to bail in the mean while.

Rookminia was tried in due course, found guilty, and the judge, commenting upon the serious nature of the crime, and its frequency amongst her countrymen and countrywomen, sentenced her to a long term of imprisonment.

As sheriff of the county, I visited the gaol weekly, and I was always saddened by the sight of this unfortunate young woman with her baby, for the child was too young to be deprived of its mother's care and sustenance. I was aware that by her own code of morals, if she had refused to give evidence on behalf of her father or her brother in their peril she would have been liable to be stoned to death by their infuriated relatives. A falsehood told in court on behalf of her brother was a venial offence compared to the fearful shame which would have been hers if she had failed him in his hour of need. Family affection, the obligations of caste, of tribal duty, of custom and religion, were all drawing her by cords which were too strong for her to break, and no idea of the

criminality or sinfulness of her action ever entered her head. Her duty seemed clear before her, and she followed it according to her knowledge of what was right and wrong.

Acting under this belief, I wrote to the Governor, and called his attention to the case of Rookminia, pointing out the peculiar circumstances of her case. After some correspondence His Excellency agreed to exercise his prerogative of mercy, although, he said, I did not seem to realize the very serious nature of the offence which Rookminia had committed. An order for her release was shortly afterwards forwarded to me, which I immediately sent over to the gaol, and the poor woman was accordingly discharged.

A few days afterwards, as I was sitting in the gallery of my house, smoking, I saw Rookminia, with some of her family, making for the door. They came up into the gallery, and, as I rose up to receive them, Rookminia threw herself flat upon the floor, and, embracing my feet, exclaimed in her broken English, "Sahib, you my god! you my god!" It was with great difficulty that I extricated myself without hurting the poor woman, who was kissing my boots; but at last I persuaded her to rise, when I took the opportunity for explaining to her and to her relations the serious consequences which would ensue if they persisted in breaking the laws of their adopted country.

With such a strange and heterogeneous population as exists in British Guiana, it is somewhat difficult to discriminate between their different

religious faiths, and, in judicial matters, to find a means for administering an oath in a way which will be binding upon the consciences of the witnesses. Mohammedan witnesses are sworn on the Koran; but Hindoos were in my time sworn on the Bible—an unknown book to them, and of no greater sanctity than Johnson's Dictionary or Bradshaw's Railway Guide. Once a coolie witness, being asked if he was not telling lies, protested his truthfulness, and said, pointing to the Bible in front of him on the rail of the witness-box, "Look, God atop; any other kind of Bible gie um, me kiss um same like me talk um."

Once, in trying a case between some Chinamen, both parties asked to be allowed to be sworn according to their native customs. To this I agreed, but bargained they must produce their own crockery, as Government made no allowance for such purposes; for I knew that their oaths were always taken with breakage of saucers. When the case was heard, each witness, as he mounted the box, held in his hand a china saucer, which, after some muttered objurgation, he dashed to the ground in front of the bench. As far as I could understand from the interpreter, each witness expressed a hope that he might be dashed to pieces like that saucer if he did not speak the truth. When the case was over the whole space round the bench was covered with broken crockery.

The most sacred oaths with the Hindoos are by the sacred bull, by holy Gunga, and by their children's heads. In one case of disputed debt,

where the defendant was a stout Hindoo woman, covered with jewelry, and evidently well endowed with this world's goods, the plaintiff said he would give up the case if the defendant would place her hands on her children's heads and swear by the sacred lota and the waters of holy Gunga that she did not owe the money. To this the defendant vehemently objected, saying that she would swear by the book, seizing the Bible, and kissing it violently; and, as she absolutely refused to swear by an oath which the court considered to be binding on her conscience, judgment went against her.

I fear that the East Indians who are taught to read and write English in the colonial schools turn their acquired knowledge to evil purposes in many cases. A Hindoo was one day detected forging an order on a Portuguese provision-shop for goods, and was remonstrated with by his pastor and master. He replied plaintively, "Boss, honest man no good this country." Another coolie entered a shop, ate and drank until he was full, and when he was asked for his money he laughed at the shopkeeper, and remarked, "Me eat um plenty, me drink um plenty, me belly full, no money hav' um, gaol go um, don't care a dam." By which it may seem that the coolie's education in all the elements of civilization has been much advanced since his introduction into the colony.

It is curious that nations so much unlike as the Congo and the Hindoo should have the same custom of naming their children after the

day on which they were born, and yet it is common to find children so named amongst both races.

CONGO.

Day.	Male.	Female.
Sunday	Quashie	Quashba.
Monday	Quio	Adjuba.
Tuesday	Quacco	Bamber.
Wednesday	Quamna	Aheoba.
Thursday	Yow	Yahba.
Friday	Quoffie	Afibba.
Saturday	Quamina	Amimba.

HINDI.

Day.	Male.	Female.
Sunday (Etwar)	Etwarroo	Etwarria.
Monday (Soomar)	Soomaroo	Soomaria.
Tuesday (Mongar)	Mungroo	Mungree.
Wednesday (Boodh)	Boodhoo	Boodhia.
Thursday (Beeky)	Beekoo	Beekhia.
Friday (Sookh)	Sookhoo	Sookhia.
Saturday (Sannicher)	Sannicheroo	Sannicherry.

Quashie, being the first name in the list of Congo names, has given his name to the whole negro race, who are known generally as Quashie. Similarly, so many East Indian names end in sawmy or sammy, such as Ram-sawmy, Mootoo-sammy, that the Creoles call all the coolies Sammy. Why all Chinamen are called Johnny I don't know. Portuguese are all called Manny because Manuel is a very common name amongst that race. With regard to calling children after the day of their birth, my readers will recollect that Robinson Crusoe called his black man Friday after the day of his capture.

At Plantation Richmond in Essequibo there

lived an East Indian immigrant named Bindharry, who was wealthy; he had houses and cows, and, above all, three pretty little daughters, who were sought in marriage by all the eligible young men in the neighbourhood. The way I made the acquaintance of Bindharry and his pretty daughters was as follows: One day, when I was holding court at Anna Regina, a handsome young Creole coolie named Ramdhin asked permission to speak to me, and when allowed to enter my retiring-room, sat down at my feet and poured out his woes. He wanted to marry one of Bindharry's daughters, Sunnicherry, so he had been making up to the old man for some time. "Sahib," he said, "me give em cow, me give em money, me give em dinner—two, three dinner—and he promise me de gal, but now he go for give em another man." I sympathized with him, but hinted that it was a delicate matter with which to interfere, and suggested that Bindharry had three daughters: perhaps one of the others would be available. No, he wanted Sunnicherry; she was the eldest, and he need not wait long for her. But if he could not get her, how was he to get his cow, money, and dinners back again? I told him I feared his dinners had gone past recall, but I promised to see what I could do about the cow and money.

I sent for the old man, and spoke to him about the matter. At first, of course, he swore that he had never encouraged Ramdhin, never had anything from him, neither cows, money, nor dinners. But when some of the bystanders began to murmur

and I pressed him, he reluctantly admitted that he had received fifty dollars and a cow from Ramdhin. I told him he must keep to his agreement to give his daughter Sunnicherry as wife to Ramdhin, or return the cow and the money. But Ramdhin, although he got his cow and his money back again, was not consoled; he seemed to have set his heart upon the girl, and for several weeks used to come and reiterate his sorrows, until I wearied of him, and told the police to turn him out of the compound.

By discreet management old Bindharry disposed of all his daughters at excellent prices, and a few years afterwards he sold up all his effects and went back to India, carrying with him more than £1000 in cash, besides a quantity of jewelry.

When I was in India as Government Emigration Agent, a ship with returning coolies was consigned to me. On board was a man named Mootee, whom I remembered as a shopkeeper on the west coast of Demerara. As soon as he arrived at the depôt at Garden Reach he lodged a complaint against the captain of the ship, whom he accused of drinking his champagne. The complaint was forwarded to Dr. Grant, at that time Protector of Emigrants in Calcutta, and he came to my office to make an investigation into the matter. At first blush it seemed preposterous; as Dr. Grant said, "How can a coolie, on board a coolie ship, having a free passage to India, have champagne at all?" But when the captain of the ship was called up, he informed us that, just before the ship left the

Demerara River, Mootee came on board in a shore-boat, rather drunk, and bringing with him two cases of champagne and a case of Eno's fruit salt. After they had been a couple of days at sea, Mootee came to the captain and surgeon-superintendent, and asked them to join him in a glass of champagne. They consented; a bottle was opened and discussed by the three of them. The next day Mootee came to the captain and told him that he was not a common coolie, and begged that he might be allowed to sleep in the saloon, and not in the hold with the other coolies. This the captain refused, and told him that as he had a free passage he must fare as the others. Mootee again and again begged the captain to let him use the saloon, and offered him more champagne, both of which were refused. So the man got angry, and as soon as the ship arrived at Calcutta he made this complaint against the skipper. On investigation we found there was no truth in the accusation, so we rated Mr. Mootee well, and told him to be gone.

In paying the coolies the amount of savings entered against the name of each, I found that Mootee had the largest amount to his credit, viz. £3000. After the baboos had paid him off by a cheque on the Bank of Bengal, he asked to see me, and then said, with many salaams, "Sahib, my people too much tief; suppose money take em, people rob em. Sahib, me give you me money for keep em, and when me come back you give em." "No, you villain," I replied, "for the first thing

you would do when you came back would be to charge me with stealing £1000 of your money." He begged me hard to keep his money for him, but I steadfastly refused. However, I told him I would take him to the bank, and deposit his money safely for him; so I put him up beside my coachman, and drove him to the Bank of Bengal. I went in, Mootee following, and asked for Mr. Cruickshank, the deputy manager. That polite gentleman quickly arrived, and asked me what he could do for me. I told him that this man—pointing to Mootee—wanted to deposit some money in the bank for six months. Mr. Cruickshank, looking at him, said, "We should be glad to oblige you, Mr. Kirke, but we don't take small deposits." Certainly Mootee did not look like a capitalist, with his bare legs and feet, hairy and dusty, a dirty white turban on his head, and clothed in an old grimy red militia coat and filthy dhootie. I assured the deputy manager that it was not a very small deposit, but £3000 sterling. "What! this man has £3000?" "Certainly;" and I showed him the draft on their own bank for that amount, signed by myself. This satisfied him; the deposit note was quickly made out, and the business soon despatched.

Immigrants to British Guiana from India make large sums of money, but when they return to India with their savings they are generally robbed by their relations. As Mootee said, "My people too much tief." The man has lost caste by crossing the *kala pani*, so the priests sweat him of a large sum of money before they will allow him to

recover his caste. Then the whole of his kindred, tribe, and village community, hearing of his return with, to them, a fabulous sum of money, come down upon him like locusts, and, to use an expressive Eastern phrase, "eat him up." I remember one family, who returned to India one Christmas-tide with a considerable sum of money—about £800 or £900, enough to keep them in luxury in India for the rest of their lives—came back to the depôt in a few months, to re-engage and return to British Guiana as indentured immigrants. I asked them how it was, and they told me that the priests and their relations had robbed them of all their money, so they wanted to go back to the colony and earn some more. "Too much bad man this country," was their description of their native land.

As I have said before, the East Indian girls are disposed of in marriage by their father, without much consideration for their personal feelings. Such things are not unknown in fashionable society in England, where there is a marriage market, which, though not as open as that of Babylon in old times, has much less excuse. During my magisterial experiences I came across a curious marriage contract, which was produced in evidence. It ran as follows:—

"Plantation Brothers, British Guiana County of Berbice. Contract of marriage entered into on Wednesday 13th February, year of our Lord 1884, between Chootwa, No. 61, ex Loodiana 1860 residing at Plantation Brothers, the father of the

bridegroom named Mahadoorlall, and Jumnee also a free Coolie woman of the same plantation, she is the Mother of the bride named Ramkalya a Coolie girl daughter of Jumnee. They are bind by promise themselves each other by faithful confidence according by this contract and Mahadoorlall bridegroom and Ramkalya bride. They both agreed for married each other and they both signed before presence of three witnesses whereof herein-undermentioned their names. Firstly the Coolie woman Jumnee acknowledged and received $20 and bind by promise for Chootwa the father of the bridegroom. If my daughter released any time to husband Mohadoorlall after married, she will pay back the $20 and also the whole expense of the marriage, and if Ramkalya keep another husband the same husband will pay the whole amount of this married. This is legal married among them, which they did alway. Their relations in India in the age of puberty propose marriage, on Saturday 16th February 1884 both the bridegroom and the bride did married, and every acquainted of this married at Pln Brothers, Berbice, Colony of British Guiana. Signed before three witnesses whereof hereinto mentioned their names on that time of epoch as hereafter. This marriage four wish and in eriedint $89. Eighty-nine dollars this is the whole amount expense. Total amount $89."

A magistrate in charge of the East Coast district received the following letter, which discloses a somewhat singular state of society :—

"SIR,—The driver of Plantation Vryheid's Lust by name of Salick, sold his wife to me for $97. After receiving this, he came two week after and take her back. I lost the amount. I beg whether I must bring this case before you or the Supreme.

"I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,

"KANHOYE his X mark."

The Supreme referred to is not, I presume, the Deity, but the Supreme Court of the Colony.

The immortal Baboo is not unknown in the colony. Witness the following letter which I received relating to a vacancy in the staff of interpreters in my court :—

"SIR,—The humble petitioner has been and will solicitation that I heard the Hindustani interpreter of Sheriffs interpreter he self left the business, and willing to go to his native country in the second ship, and if Perfector order to the Petitioner for in his compensation in the same business, obcouers I will make arrangements in the Court to look after consigment of Ordinal manner for that Statu quo. Therefore I oblige to bring in my consideration or understanding for the place. And this is my information brought to your Highness for the business, and will divulged, and humbly represents to consent the Petitioner in the same place."

Indian girls are married at a very early age, when still children; so efforts have been made in

India to raise the age at which marriage can be legally consummated. Much indignation has been expressed by European writers on the subject, who seem to have forgotten that not long ago it was a common practice amongst the highest classes in England to promote the marriages of their children at a very early age, especially when careful parents wished to secure some young lady with a large dowry. Turning over a volume published by the Historical MSS. Commission, I came across the diary of the Earl of Annesley in the reign of Charles II., in which this entry occurs: "May 20th, 1672.—This morning about 10 of the clock at Lambeth the Archbishop of Canterbury married my grandson John Power not eight years old to Mistress Katherine Fitz-Gerald his cousin german about thirteen years old. I gave her in the Chapel there and they answered as well as those of greater age. The wedding dinner and supper I gave them, and the rest of the day, and till 12 at night was spent in dancing, etc., and they lay in my house."

The Duke of Grafton, son of Charles II., when a mere boy was married to a pretty girl, daughter of Lord Arlington, and only five years old; Francis II. was only fourteen when he married Mary of Scotland, who was a few months older; and numerous examples could be quoted both from French and English history.

Owing to the early marriages of young East Indian girls, some curious complications have arisen. I remember a case in the Supreme

Criminal Court in Georgetown, where an East Indian was tried for an indecent assault upon his own wife, who was a girl under the age of consent. The jury, under the judge's direction, convicted the man, but the point of law whether he could be convicted of such an offence against his own wife was reserved for the Court of Crown Cases, which reversed the decision.

The Hindoo is more or less a fatalist; what is, must be, and it is no use railing against fate. A coolie who was sick was asked if he did not wish to go to hospital, as the doctor sahib might give him something that would cure his disease, and he replied, "Yes, me want go 'ospital; suppose me get better God 'elp um, suppose me go dead me don't care a dam."

The Indian immigrant is an adept in dramatic display, and his imagination runs riot when depicting his wrongs and endeavouring to enlist your sympathy. A Hindoo labourer from Plantation Peter's Hall once rushed into my presence, almost naked, covered with black stinking mud, and bleeding from a wound on his head. He threw himself at my feet and implored me to defend him from his brutal master, who had severely beaten him and thrown him into a muddy trench, from which he had with difficulty escaped. After a strict and prolonged inquiry, I discovered that the man had become infuriated because he was not allowed to work in the buildings where sugar was being made, but was ordered by the driver to go into the cane-fields to cut canes; so he chopped

himself about the head with his cutlass, threw himself into a filthy draining trench, and then ran off to enlist the sympathies of the magistrate against the inhuman planter.

On another occasion a fearful noise brought me out of my house, when I beheld three Hindoo women prostrate on the ground, howling and tearing their hair, a boy about eleven or twelve years old standing in their midst. When I asked them what was the matter, they pointed to the boy's face, chest, and babba, which were all smeared with fresh blood; and one of them produced a medicine-bottle full of bloody-coloured fluid, which she said was the boy's blood, carefully collected from his wounds, which had been caused by a brutal driver on the estate. I examined the boy, and found that he had a small scalp wound about half an inch long, which had bled a little. The women had evidently smeared the blood over his face, body, and clothes; and the bottle contained only water, in which apparently they had washed their blood-stained fingers.

A large number of coolies, as they are called, collect in Georgetown, where they gain a precarious livelihood by working as porters. They are miserable scarecrows, wear little or no clothes, sleep under bridges or verandas, in sawpits and boatsheds, crowd the hospitals and almshouses, and frequently their dead bodies are found in the streets.

At one time there was no mortuary in Georgetown, so there was some difficulty in disposing of

these corpses. One night I was sitting down to dinner with my wife about 7.15, when I was told that a policeman wanted to see me. I went out and asked, "What is it?" "Please, sir," said the black policeman, "we have found this man dead on the road"—pointing to a dirty old dead coolie on a stretcher—"and we have brought him to you." "What on earth did you bring him here for? Take him away." "Please, sir, where are we to take him to?" "Take him to the Central Police-station." "We have taken him there, sir, but the Inspector-General drove us out, and told us to bring him to you." "Then take him to the Colonial Hospital." After some demur the body was lifted up, and the party moved off. Half an hour afterwards the butler came in. "Please, sir, they have brought the body back again." I rushed out in a rage. "What do you mean by bringing it back here?" "Please, sir, they said at the hospital that they only took in live people, not dead 'uns." "Take him away!" I cried out. "Where shall we take him to?" "Take him to the devil!" "Yes, sir." And at last they went away with the corpse; but not knowing where to put it, they left it on a butcher's stall in the Cummingsburgh Market, in which appropriate spot I opened an inquest the next morning.

I represented the whole matter to the Government, who afterwards provided a place where dead bodies could be deposited. More recently a suitable mortuary has been provided at Le Repentir Cemetery.

CHAPTER XI.

Negro population—Their manners and habits—Slavery—The African at home—Amelioration of slavery in the colony—Fine men—Nocturnal habits—Servants in British Guiana—Stealing or taking—Oratory and letter-writing—A little knowledge is a dangerous thing—Amusing witnesses—Curious use of words—Intoxication, definition of—What is heaven?—Miscegenation—Half-and-half illegitimacy—Mulattoes—Division of races—Illegitimate births—Marriage garments—"Love, honour, and obey"—An uncertain husband—Wifely obedience—Dangers of marriage—A provident husband—Consolation for widows—High-sounding titles—Judas Iscariot—The goddess of chaste—What is a bachelor?—*Au revoir*—Want of midwives; their ignorance and barbarity.

The black population of British Guiana are descended from the old slaves, who were brought from Africa to work on the cotton and sugar estates in the West Indies. The negro is one of the few aboriginal races which can live side by side with the white man and hold his own; in fact, in countries which suit his constitution and habits, he is gradually ousting the white element. The morals and habits of the working-classes in the colony are not altogether of the best. It is curious to note what a superior class of people the old slaves are to their descendants. You can always tell the difference at once. The old slaves are so much cleaner both in their persons and

in their houses; their manners are courtly and pleasing, and their voices soft and low. They have all told me that they were better off in slavery time than they were after its abolition. I think that much useless sympathy has been expended upon the poor black slave. The lot of a slave upon a sugar plantation was not an unhappy one; the Legrees were few and far between, and the majority of the masters were kind, humane men. It is the fashion to talk as if these Africans had been a free peasantry captured by brutal slavers, and enslaved by them. But, as a matter of fact, the poor negro only exchanged one slavery for another less cruel and revolting.

All the stories that Mrs. Beecher-Stowe could collect of the cruelties practised on English sugar estates for two hundred years would be as nothing to the abominable tortures, bloodshed, and inhuman cruelties practised in the kingdoms of Dahomey and Ashanti in a single month. If there be any foundation of fact in Rider Haggard's book "Nada, the Lily," the life of an African on a plantation must have been a heaven on earth compared to life in such a land of despotism and fetichism. Human life in Africa was a thing of nought. To gratify his lust of blood, or to propitiate some infernal deity, a king of Dahomey or chief of Benin would slaughter in cold blood hundreds of men and women; and we all know what our soldiers discovered when Ashanti and Benin were last captured. The slaves in Demerara were valuable chattels, to be well fed and well housed,

to be nursed when sick, and to be taken care of in old age. The slaves could not have been badly used in one respect, for we find that three years after emancipation 101 ex-slaves bought Plantation Friendship, on the east coast of Demerara, from Dr. Martin for $90,000 cash; and between 1839 and 1854 more than $250,000 were invested in land in that one district by the emancipated labourers.

A curious fact, not generally known, is that some of the slaves themselves owned slaves, and were enriched by their labour. The negro was lustful of power and authority over others; and when he obtained it, exercised it with a harshness and severity which often contrasted unfavourably with the treatment which he himself received from his white master.

The negroes, both men and women, are a fine race. They have splendid figures, and in size they are far above the average of other races. There is less difference between the sexes than in any other race. The women are as big and powerful as the men; they are quite as independent, and more ready for a fight. You rarely see two black men fighting, but it is a common sight to see two stalwart black women mauling each other. The carriage and walk of the black women is far superior to that of most Europeans. This partly arises from their habit of carrying everything on their heads, but it is also attributable to their perfectly proportioned figures. Unfortunately, of late years the women have acquired the habit of

employing coolies to carry their baskets for them, so they will soon lose their splendid carriage. Accustomed to nudity for so many centuries, they have not yet learned how to dress with taste. They have a savage's preference for bright colours, which on their stalwart figures look glaring and vulgar; whereas the Hindoo, in as bright and more varied colours, always produces a beautiful harmony. "Judging from the habits of the negro," says Mr. Rodway, "we must presume that his ancestor was a nocturnal animal. As we approach the torrid zone, we find everywhere a tendency to indulge in the noonday siesta, but in no race is this characteristic so highly developed as in the negro. He will sleep in any position, and under almost all circumstances. At night, on the contrary, they remain wide awake for hours, chattering away like a lot of parrots. At a ball, or a wake, you will find the negro at his liveliest in the small hours of the morning."

Our servants in British Guiana were mostly black or coloured people. I cannot say they were good servants; they were mostly idle, dirty, and thoughtless, but they were affectionate and amusing, and, as a rule, fairly honest. They have one peculiarity in drawing the line between stealing money and appropriating other property. All my servants used to help themselves to my sugar, bread, fish, spirits, beer, or anything to which they had access; but I could leave loose silver or copper about without missing a cent, and they would be furious if you called them thieves because they

took your food and drinks. A thief is a person who *steals* money, but a servant only *takes* his or her master's goods.

In their speeches and writings the educated negro almost equals the celebrated Bengali Baboo. I have received many extraordinary and amusing letters from residents in my different magisterial districts. Take the following as a sample :—

"Sir,—You yourself is a mortal man that God Almighty has made, and through your dignity and wisdom Her Majesty has appointed you to assist the Governor to rool the nations. Therefore Sir, you become not only a Magistrate, but as a father for us in this Demerara River District. So, Sir, I trust with all confidence that you will hearken to my humble statement. I am obliged to inform Your Worship that on the 11th March 1874 about seven o'clock in the night I was barbarously beaten by Joseph Adonis and his wife with sticks, and inflict wounds on my body and Bloodshed. Also Deprived me of the sum of twelve dollars and seventy-two cents I had brought from town with me, the very night, was tied into a handkerchief and was into my pocket. Both parties deprived me all. I am obliged to confess to Your Worship that I was overtaken in liquor and became drunk, so that I could not defend myself. Afterwards they hit upon the results of what they had done, they planned out to take the first steps of Law before Your Worship so as to make their ends right, and before I recovered my health from the

beating, her husband already set up his wife before Your Worship with their complaint. Moreover the Complainer have many witnesses that are living with her in one aboad and her husband soporting them. They will no doubt purge themselves before Your Worship, and I having only one though a sconstable and slow of speech. I hereby subject myself to Your Worship decision on Court day, and trust that the Almighty will enhance Your Worship to greater Honour for justice sake."

Their speeches are as wonderful as their letters. At a black wedding one of the guests delivered an oration which he had carefully written down.

"My Friends, it is with feelings of no ordinary nature which have actuated my inmost heart on this present occasion, for on such festivities so full of mirth and aggrandisement, when the Bridegroom and Bride in all their splendour repair to the house of reception, and there we find familiar friends and neighbours heralding the consummation of their enterprise, it fills me with that enthusiasm which otherwise would fail to draw out our congratulations.

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"And now I must close, and take the phrase *Ne quid nemis*—'too much of one thing is good for nothing.' Trusting these few remarks may be found *multum in parvo*, as I am now attacked with *cacoethes loquendi*. I shall resort to my *ex cathedrâ*, asking the ladies present melodiously to sing for me a verse of the hymn—

"'How welcome was the call,
And sweet the festal day.'"

Black people are, as a rule, very improvident, and it is no use arguing with them that it is unwise to eat and drink for one day at an expense which must entail hunger and want on a future day; they will always make such a reply as this: "Please God, me massa, me must drunk to-night; to-morrow ain't come yet."

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. I remember overhearing three black men talking together at a local exhibition held in the Assembly Rooms in Georgetown, where the Colony Arms, with the motto *Damus petimusque vicissim* were conspicuously displayed.

First scholar: "Is what language is this?" (referring to the motto). "It must be some of dem foreign tongue."

Second scholar: "Yes bo, you is right, is Dutch. Before time, you know, de Calony belang to de Dutch."

Third scholar. "Dutch who! it ain't no Dutch, is English. Don't you see, D-A-M Dam, U-S us—Dam us. Is what buckra always a do us poor people."

But the greatest fun is obtained from the witnesses and prisoners when they appear in the Magistrate's Court. Some of their answers when under examination are witty, some are ludicrous, and the gravity of the presiding magistrate is often sorely tried. A witness in the Supreme Criminal Court was asked if he had done a thing

spontaneously. "Oh yes," said the witness. The judge, thinking he did not understand, asked him if he knew the meaning of the word. "Oh yes, your Honour, it means to be candid, to be punctual, to be positive." So the judge dried up, seeing that he had met a cleverer man than himself.

At the same sessions the judge asked a witness, "Was it a severe blow?" "Yes, sir, it was a compactable blow." Judge: "What do you mean?" Witness: "Yes, sir, it was a good hard social blow."

Bullying barristers of the Old Bailey stamp are not unknown in British Guiana, but they often find the witnesses too much for them. Counsel in one case, trying to force his view of a transaction on a witness, said, "Now, sir, what I say is true." Witness: "I no know dat." Counsel: "What do you mean, sir?" Witness: "I kiss book to talk true; you no kiss book, you hable for lie."

A black man was being cross-examined by counsel in the Criminal Court, and being rather hard pressed, became indignant and excited, and exclaimed, "Look you; you tink you catch me, but you lie. I been here too often. I been to gaol too; you can't catch me. Bring two Bibles, I kiss dem."

Some amusing cross-examinations take place when both witness and prisoner are men of the same class. The black people use words in a curious way—a sort of Alice-in-Wonderland way

—meaning just the opposite of what they intend to say. It is a common practice of theirs, when describing their injuries, to say, "He beat me most merciful, sah!" meaning, of course, unmercifully. "Remember," says the prisoner to the witness, "that you have a dying soul," meaning just the contrary. A prisoner, who was somewhat at a loss for a subject of cross-examination, addressed the witness: "Does you know de ninth commandment?" Witness (with indignation): "Go to bed, man! I got a dying soul to account for, and I ain't going to tell a lie, commandment or no commandment." After this cross-examination was over, I told the prisoner that he could address the jury. "Tanks, your honour," he replied, "but I is a pore man and can't scarcely dress myself, much less all dem gentlemen," which was evidently "meant sarkastick."

In the colony, as in England, it is difficult to obtain a definition of the exact state of a man under alcoholic influence. The various shades of drunkenness are minutely definable. Once I asked a policeman, when I was holding court at Capoey, "Was the prisoner drunk?" "Drunk, your worship! oh no, he was only social." And every time you ask the same question you get a different answer. In the minds of most black people a man is never drunk unless he lies helpless and insensible, like a log, by the roadside.

In Suddie court-room I once asked a witness if he were married. "Not yet," he replied, "but



COOLIE GIRL, BRITISH GUIANA (*p.* 208).



"TIGRESS OF TIGER BAY" (*p.* 48).

[*To face p.* 260.

I have a girl named Sarah who is my repeating wife."

At the same court I was examining a little girl to ascertain whether she had religious knowledge enough to understand the nature of an oath; so I asked her if she knew who God was. She said, Yes, she knew God: he lived at Bush Lot; and when I asked her if she knew that there was a heaven and hell, she replied that heaven was a place where lots of foo-foo soup and fish were to he had.

I told this story to a brother magistrate, and he capped it by another which happened to him at Belfield.

Magistrate, to small boy, aged ten, who appeared in the witness-box: "Now, boy, do you know what an oath is?" Boy: "Oh yes, sir." Magistrate: "If you were to kiss the Bible and then tell a lie, where would you go to after?" Boy: "I would go to the Portuguee shop, sir."

As I have before remarked, the various nationalities and races which inhabit British Guiana have produced most curious effects of miscegenation, and this has resulted in the most delicate subdivision of social grades. The pure black people despise the mulattoes, who in return look down upon the black; a quadroon takes the pas of a mulatto, and the married women turn up their noses at their sisters living in unlawful unions; the legitimate scorn the illegitimate, and so on. But sometimes distinctions are drawn which seem to outsiders rather subtle. A parson

was making a pastoral visit to his flock, and, speaking to the grandmother of a fine boy some two years old, who was running about the house, said, "What a sad pity such a fine child is illegitimate!" "Illegitimate, passon!—youself too!" exclaimed the irate grannie. "His mother is a decetent married woman, she husband a pan-boiler in Berbice, married fifteen years Easter coming, and his fadder a manager used to be in Essequibo. How you call he illegitimate?" "But," gently replied the parson, "if his father was not married to his mother there can be no doubt as to his condition." "Well, passon," said the old lady, "if you say his fadder illegitimate I isn't mind, but his mother is a decetent married woman, and if the boy isn't legitimate, he harf and harf."

There was an amusing story told of a parson in Antigua. A missionary meeting was being held in the Church schoolroom, when the proceedings were interrupted by the unseemly behaviour of some mulatto young men who crowded about the doorways, so the parson strode down the building, and addressing the young men, exclaimed, "You men, the black people despise you, and the white people despise you, and if you don't behave yourselves better we will cease to make you."

The black people, as a rule, bully the unfortunate coolies when they have them at an advantage; but I have seen twenty coolies with hackia-sticks, and led by a white overseer, clear the middle walk of an estate of a mob of black

men, who ran for their lives. Despite the scarcity of women amongst the East Indian population, it is the rarest thing in the world for an Indian to take up with a black woman. There is a mutual antipathy between the races. A black prisoner once asked a coolie witness, "You know me?" The Hindoo, with supreme contempt, replied, "Me no keep company with black men."

The ceremony of marriage is not much regarded among the masses in Demerara. In 1885 the percentage of illegitimate births was 61·08, and I don't think matters have improved much since. As a comparison, I may mention that in the same year the percentage in Ireland was only 2·08. One reason why such a minority of the coloured people in British Guiana are married is that they won't marry unless they can do so like white people, with carriages, white satin, and wedding-cake. Some of the more respectable people form unions which last for years, and finally end in marriage, the children often acting as bridesmaids to their mother. It is also absolutely necessary that proper wedding garments should be worn. A city clergyman, after long and patient entreaty, had prevailed upon a man and woman, both well up in years, who had been "living in sin," to get married. The day was fixed and the bride arrived at church, where the bridegroom had preceded her. What was her horror and indignation to see that he was dressed in a short jacket, or jumper, instead of a long black frock-coat, which is *de rigueur* on such occasions. It was more than she could

stand, the insult was overpowering; so she bounced out of church, and went back to her house, saying, "She would be d——d if she would marry any man in a common jumper."

Even when they are married, the pledge to love, honour, and obey is not very strictly kept by some women. For instance, a married lady, hearing her husband praised by the curate of her parish, exclaimed, "Me husbant! Is me husbant you call a good man? He read his Bible? Yes; but if you watch you will see it upsy down, and he reading Revelations for Genesis. He ain't nothing but a d——d old hangman!"

Marriages are made the excuse for a good spree, which is kept up till next morning, and often ends in a free fight and both bride and bridegroom appearing before the magistrate. Sometimes it would seem that the spree is the main object of the wedding, if one can believe the following dialogue, which was overheard in the street—First lady: "I hear you bin marry las' week. Is who your husbant?" Second lady: "He from de diggins, but I ain't 'member he name. We had a hable wedding, carriage and everyting. I just hear in de market that me husban' gone back to de diggins since Tuesday."

Generally something ludicrous happens at these weddings. At a marriage at Mahaicony, after the feast was over, the bridegroom suggested to the bride that it was time to go home. "Eh, eh," said she. "Go home wid you, onpossible! You must be mad!" The bridegroom tried hard

to teach her her duty, but it was no use. She said she wouldn't leave her pappa, for she always had a decent "karratah," and she didn't know what encouragement she had given him to make him think she would do such a "wutless thing as go to he house."

Married women are apt to give themselves airs, so it is as well to think the matter over carefully before hurrying into matrimony. I heard a story about a hard-working, well-meaning Wesleyan minister, who was urging an old man to marry the woman with whom he had lived for many years. But at last, when the subject was renewed, the old man replied, "Well, minister, we have discoursed together—me son John, and me datter Selina—and dem all say married is very danger. Dis time de ole woman 'tand quiet; but de children say, if I marry she, de old woman will get out-lawded, and put on too much airs. Better 'tand easy."

But it sometimes happens that a man is too anxious to get married, and runs the danger of being a bigamist or trigamist. During the Jubilee year, 1887, one of the clergy announced that in honour of the Queen's Jubilee he would marry couples without fees. One day an African came to him and said he wanted to be married. "All right," said the parson, "bring your bride." "Yes, passon, me bring 'em—me bring two." "What, bring two? Impossible! You cannot have more than one wife." "Yes, passon, me know. He very wicked have more than one wife;

never do sich a ting. Me marry two, but one for 'tand one side till first dead, so leff me." He thought he would take advantage of the cheap marrying to provide himself with wives for life.

In a country where the males outnumber the females, it is not often that a widow is unable to console herself for the loss of her husband or companion; but she rarely does so with the rapidity of Nancy Bascom, about whom the following story was told. She was seen sitting and crying over her dead husband. "Don't cry, mammy," said a consoling friend, "don't cry, man dead, man dey." This consolation in the reminder that though one man was dead, some remained alive, acted benignly on the widow's sorrow. She lifted her head, dried her tears, and replied, "Yes, sistah is true, and one old man been ask me already."

The negroes are very fond of long, high-sounding names. Surnames have been acquired by the ex-slaves, but they show their freedom by not tying themselves down to any one name, but change it at pleasure. Numbers of Congo men were called after the proprietor or manager of the estate on which they were first located, so we find great numbers of Bascoms, Fields, Russells, and Macalmans. The old slave names, such as Venus, Adonis, Hercules, Pompey became surnames, so that we have Thomas Hercules, William Adonis. Titles find much favour with them, especially amongst the ladies—prince, princess, queen, lady, duchess. One decidedly plain young woman told

me her name was Lovely Venus ; whilst another dirty commonplace piece of humanity, after she had kissed the Bible, gave her name as Princess Matilda. I was rather taken aback by a swaggering buck nigger at Suddie, who stepped into the witness-box and told the clerk his name was Wellington Napoleon Hamilton Smith. Knowing their weakness, a wag of a registrar endowed two unfortunate boys with celebrated titles.

"Massa," said a respectable black gentleman to the Registrar of Births for his district—"massa, me make you know dat for me wife confine Tuesday gone and she gie me twins, both of dem boys, and me ax you be so kind as gie me name for dem." "Well," said the Registrar, "I think you had better call them Waverley and Guy Mannering." "Tank you, me massa, dem name fust rate, but me beg you write dem on a crip of paper, else me no 'member dem."

Sometimes they can find reasons for their eccentricity in the choice of names. A country parson was once taken aback when the happy father, presenting his tenth son for baptism, announced that he had selected for the unfortunate infant the name of Judas Iscariot. Said he, "Dats the boy's name. Judas hez been slighted. Nobody hez eber had de immortal courage to name a chile from dat man. But dat ain't de main reason why I named him Judas; I'se got de Bible ter 'stain me in gibben de chile dat name." "How does the Bible sustain you in desiring to perpetuate that name?" asked the astonished parson.

"It's dis fack; Christ in remarking ob Judas said it would hab been better for dat man ef he hadn't been born." "Well?" "An' considering how many mouts is opened at the do' when I goes home wid a side of meat, it would be better fur dat boy of mine ef he had nebber seen daylight. I takes de Scriptur fer de references. In de fucher, ef I finds dat de boy hez made improvements on hisself den I change his name ter Jim."

My old friend X. Beke told me a ridiculous story about two black girls who were returning from work, and met on the road. They were wearing but a scanty amount of clothes, but each had a baby in her arms, the result of youthful indiscretion. There was some quarrel between them, and a wordy war ensued. At the close one damsel, turning away, said, "Well, I don want no more discoorse with you, Miss Teraza." "Me make you know, marm," retorted the other girl, "that for me name no Teraza but Tereesa." "Well, me dear," was the reply, "Teraza or Tereesa both de same, for me name a better name than for your own, for me name Diana de Goddess of Chaste;" and she strutted off with a swing of her ragged skirt.

I have written above of the curious way in which the people muddle up and misapply words. The following dialogue was heard in the street: "Who dead, me dear?" "A bachelor child no mo." "Wha he name?" "Miss Bessy Collymore." "Eh! eh! how you make she a bachelor?" "Well, you see she no been married,

and women who no been married yet is called bachelor." "Fader! I never knew dat."

As they use words of abuse which they don't understand themselves, but their very vagueness making them seem more terrible, they are equally outraged if you use words to them which they don't understand, and which sound of an abusive nature, like Sheridan's fish-fag who was rendered dumb by being called an isosceles triangle. In good-humoured familiarity a lady going out once said to her servant, "Au revoir!" but was astonished by the reply, "Ow! me missy, so long 'ave I bin wid you, and for to cuss me like a this, yourself too!"

There is a great want in Demerara of an institution for the proper training of midwives. The old women who are employed for this necessary work are stupid, ignorant, and superstitious, with one or two exceptions. An inquest was held on the body of a young woman named Hope, who lost her life through the utter stupidity and barbarity of the midwife, a woman named Amsterdam. She deliberately tied the woman with a rope and stretched her; then manipulated her body in a violent way, expecting the energetic treatment would help the birth; at last, the kneading process having failed, she belaboured the poor woman's body with a stick, being unable to think of anything which could better help the poor suffering, tortured patient out of her trouble. The midwife had been called in on the 28th of March, and on the 30th of March, 1874, after suffering awful

agonies, Hope died, her child still unborn. Talking about a school for the training of midwives, I was reading an account of a meeting in London in support of such an institution, when a lady speaker electrified her audience by asserting that she had given birth to six fine children without the intervention of a man.

CHAPTER XII.

Good conduct of the coloured people—Occasional outbreaks—Riots in Georgetown—Portuguese shopkeepers—Antipathy between them and the masses—Murder of Julia Chase—March, 1889—Assault in the market—Rising of the people—Police—Special constables—Street fighting—Incendiary fires—West India Regiment—Volunteers—Proclamation—Permission to fire—Results—Arrival of bluejackets and marines of H.M.S. *Canada*—Unfortunate murder—Running amok—Excitement—Emptying the gaol—Ludicrous results—Compensation for damage done by rioters—Creole superstitions—Obeah—Poisoning—Education—Want of reverence—Confirmation—Jumping Jenny—Coloured gentlemen—Extension of the franchise—A local civil service—Painless dentistry—A state of prognostication—The benefits of corporation.

Taking them as a whole, the negroes can be favourably compared with most white races; they are usually a law-abiding, well-behaved people. Crowds like those which attend the races are more noisy than an English crowd, but there is less ruffianism and brutality; but at times, under strong excitement, the black man becomes riotous and dangerous. Such an occurrence happened in my time in Georgetown, and may fairly be included in these reminiscences.

Amongst other attempts to supply the demand for labour on the estates after the abolition of slavery, was the introduction into British Guiana

of a number of Portuguese from Madeira and the Azores. As labourers on the estates they proved a failure; the first shiploads imported were almost destroyed by fever, and those that followed soon deserted the cane pieces and embarked in other pursuits. So much mortality had attended the first introduction of Portuguese labourers from Madeira and the Azores, that the medical authorities were at their wits' end to devise some remedy or preventive. Dr. Blair, in a letter to the Lamaha Committee, advocated placing newly arrived Portuguese on the pegass land, which bordered parts of the canal, as an experiment as to whether peat land is a preventive against intermittent fever. This strange proposal found no favour with the committee.

Being very thrifty people, with an innate taste for bargaining, they soon saved up money, and established themselves as shopkeepers and tradesmen, and that so successfully that in thirty years' time the whole small retail business of the colony fell into their hands. With one or two exceptions, every rum-shop in the colony was owned by Portuguese, and half a dozen firms of the same nationality were firmly established in Georgetown as wholesale merchants. The coloured population of the colony, with a few honourable exceptions, is of an entirely opposite type to the Portuguese. Quashie lives only for the day; he never saves any money, and never looks for a day ahead. Even in furnishing provisions for daily use, the poorer black people never buy anything except for

immediate needs by pennyworths at a time, and so naturally pay the highest price for their necessary food. A Portuguese shop exists at the corner of every street, with which all the poor people in its immediate neighbourhood have numerous dealings every day. The usual antagonistic feeling which must always exist between buyer and seller exists between them; and this feeling is much intensified by the contempt with which the people treat the Portuguese, and the fraudulent spirit which the shopkeepers show towards their customers. The use of unjust weights and measures is a common practice amongst these small shop-keepers; and although they cannot detect it, the coloured people are well aware of the fact. Their feelings are too often expressed in insults and menaces, which sometimes drive even the mean-spirited shopmen to retaliation, and a row ensues, which brings the policeman on the scene, and finds its development in the magistrate's court.

The ill feeling between the Portuguese and the coloured population first came to a head in 1846, when a general rising of the black population caused the destruction of most of the Portuguese shops in several of the principal districts of the colony. Although the public peace was not broken, the ill feeling between the two races never died out, but only slumbered, waiting for an opportunity to break out afresh. Such an incentive occurred in 1889. A man named Manoel Gousalves, a Portuguese, had murdered his paramour,

Julia Chase, a mulatto girl, in open daylight in a small room in a yard filled with tenants, and in the presence of a witness, by shooting her with a revolver, he having openly and frequently expressed his intention to kill her. He was tried and condemned to death; but, for some reason or another, the officer at that time administering the Government, in the absence on leave of the Governor, considered the case one for the interposition of the Crown, and commuted the sentence to penal servitude for life.

Unfortunately, not long before a coloured man had been executed for a similar offence, and the coloured people were indignant that different justice was meted out to one race from another. The governing classes were well aware of the mistake that had been made, and the judges of the Supreme Court took the somewhat unusual course of memorializing the Secretary of State on the subject, stating that they had reason to fear that, if such distinctions were made in administering justice to men of different races and colour, the consequences to the colony might be very serious. This memorial received confirmation in a very short time.

On the 19th of March, 1889, a row occurred in the Stabroek Market between a black boy and a Portuguese shopkeeper, which ended in the man striking the boy on the head with a pole, and laying him apparently lifeless at his feet. A cry went through the market that the Portuguese had murdered a black boy, and about two hundred

black and coloured people gathered in a mob and made an attack upon the Portuguese stalls. The constables in the market were unable to cope with the mob, so a messenger was sent to the Central Police Station, and about twenty-five policemen were sent with two inspectors to their assistance. By their efforts the crowds were driven out of the market, and the gates were closed, the injured boy being sent to the Colonial Hospital.

But all the people who were driven out of the market rushed in an excited state through the city, calling out to the people in all directions for vengeance on the Portuguese. The whole town was up; Portuguese passing along the streets, or riding in the tramcars, were assaulted with sticks and stones, and had to fly for refuge to their houses; shops were attacked, and their contents thrown out into the streets. In fact, the whole city in a few hours became at the mercy of a riotous mob.

Georgetown is a city of more than fifty thousand inhabitants, and the streets measure about fifty miles in extent. There were about a hundred and fifty police stationed in different parts of the city, but half of them had been on night duty, and were lying in. The Governor of the Colony, Viscount Gormanston, had returned from leave a few weeks before the *émeute*, and upon him the mayor and town council waited to inform him of the state of affairs. I was at that time Sheriff of Demerara, and His Excellency sent for me and the acting Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Harragin, and

informed me that he looked to me to preserve the peace of the city, placed me in supreme command over the military, volunteers, and police, and authorized me to swear in a hundred special constables to help the police in the execution of their duties.

It was evident that His Excellency had underrated the serious nature of the outbreak and the difficulties with which we had to contend, as he refused the mayor's request to double the number of special constables to be enrolled; so I found myself at nightfall with about a hundred policemen and a hundred special constables armed (?) with some rotten old police truncheons, to restrain a mob of ten thousand people scattered throughout fifty miles of streets.

Nothing is more disheartening and demoralizing than street-fighting. As you charge the mob, they disperse, running into the open yards on both sides, from which they assail you with volleys of broken bottles, bricks, and stones, and then form up in your rear. If you right-about face and charge back again, the same tactics are repeated. If you clear one street, the mob swarms into the next. Bottles, jugs, and brickbats are flying in all directions, apparently from invisible hands; and whereas the members of your force are being continually diminished by injuries received and by the necessity for escorts for prisoners and extra guards for police-stations, the mob has, on the other hand, a tendency to swell in numbers as the row goes on.

We had a very hot time of it that night. Fifty police-constables were injured and two inspectors placed *hors de combat*; and there were very few of the hundred specials who were not wounded or otherwise injured, some of them seriously. Three incendiary fires had taken place; so, soon after midnight, I went to Government House, and told the Governor I could do nothing without further assistance; and he then wrote an order authorizing me to call out the military, and placing them under my orders. The troops which at that time formed our small garrison were two companies of the West India Regiment, under the command of Major Caulfield. Now, between these black troops and the black police there was a long-standing feud, and I was not at all sure that they would not side with the mob against their ancient enemies the police. The mob were well aware of this, for many of the women taunted me as I drove through the streets. "You! Sheriff! bring out the soldiers, and we will wash the streets with your blood." I have been blamed by many for not calling out the soldiers, so I have given my reasons.

When I left Government House I rode down to the Central Police Station, where I was met by Major Turner, commanding the volunteers, who informed me that he had a company of his men under arms at the Drill Hall, if I wanted them. I jumped at his offer, and soon had the pleasure of seeing his men march in, more than eighty strong. With them we cleared several streets at the point of the bayonet, and made many prisoners.

The Portuguese shops being now mostly sacked, and the rioters being either drunk or exhausted, there was a lull in the storm about 4 a.m. But this peace was only temporary; at 8 a.m. the rioting was again in full blast. A large party had started up the east bank of the Demerara River, destroying all the Portuguese shops *en route*. The police were tired out, the lock-ups were crammed with prisoners, and things looked very black indeed. The rioters at last made an attack upon a large rum-shop called the White Coconut Tree. They were driven back by the police, but were gathering reinforcements to renew the attack. I went to Lord Gormanston, and told him I must have permission to fire on the mob, a permission hitherto withheld. So His Excellency gave me a written order authorizing the police to fire upon all persons breaking into any shops or houses or found pillaging therein, and ordered proclamations to that effect to be posted up over the city.

From that moment the riot was virtually at an end. After the first discharge of the police revolvers, when the mob saw we were firing in earnest, they gradually melted away, and all danger of any serious catastrophe was at an end. However, for several days and nights the city was patrolled by large bodies of police and special constables. The Governor had telegraphed to Barbados, and H.M.S. *Canada* arrived and landed a force of bluejackets and marines, but, fortunately, we had no need of their services.

After the row had been suppressed, it was

nearly rekindled by an unfortunate occurrence which took place about nine o'clock at night a few days afterwards. The rum-shops, which had been closed for several days by order of the Governor, had been reopened, and the people had been making up for the time they had been deprived of their favourite beverage. At the Peacock rum-shop, which was situated in a low part of the town, a coloured man from the Spanish main had run amok, and had stabbed a black man to the heart with his long knife. I was called at once to the scene of the tragedy, and found the rum-shop surrounded by a yelling mob, a black man lying on the platform in front of the house on his back in a pool of blood, with his arms extended, and his murderer inside the shop, guarded by a few police-men. The Inspector-General met me here, and we walked amongst the crowd, trying to pacify them, assuring them that the assailant was not a Portuguese, and that we would guarantee that justice should be done upon him. We impressed five of the most respectable men we could find, and I swore them in as a jury over the body of the man lying on the platform. The Spaniard was removed, under a strong guard, to the Central Police Station, the dead body was carted to the mortuary, and after a time we persuaded the people to disperse.

The Spaniard was in due course tried for murder, and it came out in the evidence that he had been drinking and became quarrelsome, push-ing people about and threatening them, until a row began between himself and two black men,

one of whom he wounded in the arm, and the other he stabbed in the chest with a long knife, which he drew out of his waistband. He was condemned to death, and the sentence was carried out. He was a fine, handsome man, of splendid physique and regular features. I visited him the day before his execution, and he told me that he believed he had killed the black man, because all the witnesses had sworn that they had seen him do it, but that he himself had no recollection of it at all; that he had been drinking for two days, and remembered nothing of what happened at the rum-shop, and only came to himself in the police-cell. The next morning, after I had read his death-warrant, and he was being pinioned by the executioner, he made the same statement, walked on to the scaffold with head erect and a firm step, and met his death as a brave man should.

One ludicrous circumstance arose out of the riots. The gaol was so crowded with prisoners that we could not find room for the people who must be removed from the lock-ups, so I obtained the permission of the Governor to discharge from gaol all prisoners who were in custody for trivial offences against the labour laws, vagrancy, and such like. These men, to the number of about fifty, were mustered and discharged, but some of the East Indian prisoners refused to leave the gaol, and had literally to be kicked out. One coolie fell on the ground at my feet, embraced my legs, and begged me not to send him out of gaol. "Sahib," he pleaded, "you me father, you me mother, who

feed me, who care me." This reminds me of a story I heard in India. There was a riot among the prisoners in the Alipore gaol, near Calcutta, which came to the Governor's ears. That gallant officer came out of his house and proceeded to the prison yard. For a moment the row ceased at the appearance of the Governor, when he shouted out, "Look here, you pigs, if you are not quiet at once, by G—d, *I will turn you all out of the gaol!*" at which fearful threat all the mutineers became as quiet as mice.

Of course, after the riots were over, the Portuguese, who had not made the slightest attempt to defend either themselves or their property, demanded compensation from the Government for the losses they had sustained; and after a protracted inquiry, which was much prolonged owing to the false and exaggerated claims which were made, more than $75,000 was paid to the sufferers.

The creoles are very superstitious, but I never knew that they construed literally the old adage, "Take a hair of the dog that bit you," until one day, when I saw Bayley, my butler, cutting some hair off my dog Lion's tail. "What are you doing, Bayley?" I said. "Please, sir," he replied, "that old black man say the dog bite him, and he beg for a few hairs to cure the bite."

Much has been told and written about that strange belief of the negro race called "obeah." It is similar to the ancient belief in witchcraft, and the obeah man is only another form of the

witch or wizard of the past. Everything that is mysterious and incomprehensible to the negro is obeah. In practising my judicial functions I have often been made the subject of an obeah. On one occasion, on stepping on to the dais in court, I found it covered with small red things, which, on examination, proved to be hundreds of bits of red paper cut into the shape of hearts. Another time, on one arm of my chair was hung a sort of rag doll, which, on being opened, was found to contain a human tooth, some foul-smelling black powder, and some withered herb. This was great obeah, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I could compel any of the black policemen to touch the unclean thing. I have found similar articles suspended over my hammock when I was asleep, and the curious thing is one can never discover how the different articles are placed in the position in which they are found. Even if any one knows, they are too frightened to speak, for fear of the obeah working evil to themselves.

In some cases obeah takes the form of poisoning. There was one case that came under my knowledge, where a jealous mulatto woman, who, as the custom was, had been her master's servant and concubine, obtained from an obeah man a love-philtre to retain her master's affections, which had strayed away, and the poor man, imbibing this potion daily in his coffee, wasted away, and died in agony.

It is rarely safe to keep a black cook after determining to send her away. In lieu of a month's

notice, most masters prefer to give a month's wages and get rid of the woman, as she is very apt to put something in your food to turn your heart towards her again.

Since the extension of education in the Colony, the creole youths begin to despise agriculture as a means of support, and wish to become parsons, lawyers, or doctors. It is wonderful how they succeed, and where the money comes from to send them to England. I heard an amusing conversation between two old men on this subject, discussing the future of a promising young man. First old man: "He is a big boy, and must do something for a living. You have mind to make me him a liyer?" Second old man: "No, liyer, no, my mind ain't gie me fo dat. I has a cousin in Berbice gaol for cutting she matty; an oder one in the sea-wall gang; and me wife's brudder in Massaruni for stealing cow; there is law enough in me family already."

Although professing Christians, many of the people look upon their religion as a higher kind of obeah. It is difficult to persuade them to behave with proper solemnity at the Sacrament, and their conduct in church is sometimes disgraceful. It is not to be wondered at that uneducated negroes should fail to understand the mysteries of the Eucharist, which have divided Christendom into a dozen opposing camps. The actual Presence was, however, realized by an old woman, who, on receiving the cup before the altar, quickly, and before she could be stopped, drained it of its

contents. When remonstrated with, she replied, "Ow! me massa, me too much lub me Jesus."

A magistrate on the east coast tried a young woman for using abusive and obscene language on the public road, and as it was not her first offence of a similar nature, a fine of $10, or in default of payment a month's imprisonment was imposed. Before the court rose, some of the relatives and friends of the woman humbly begged his worship to reduce the fine, as they couldn't raise $10, and they were very anxious to keep the woman out of prison. The worthy beak yielded to their solicitations, and reduced the fine to $6, which was all the woman could raise. When the magistrate was leaving for town, the sergeant in charge of the police-station said to him, "Do you know, sir, why the woman was so anxious to keep out of gaol?" "No; why?" "Because the bishop is holding a confirmation to-morrow, and she is to be confirmed; her white dress and veil are all ready." A friend of mine had a cook who had been confirmed four times to his knowledge.

In the country districts of the colony some incidents occur in the churches which somewhat disturb the solemnity of public worship. I have mentioned in another place the pranks of the goats at St. John's Church, near Suddie, and a more ludicrous thing happened in a church in Wakanaam. An early celebration was to take place, and the parson in his surplice and the devout worshippers were all gathered together in the sacred building. The service proceeded, but



AVENUE OF PALMS, WAKENAAM.

[*To face p.* 284.

when the parson turned to the altar to arrange the sacred elements for consecration, he started back, for coiled on the top of the napkin lay a large snake, locally known as Jumping Jenny, which fixed its glittering eyes on the horrified cleric, and moved its coils as if meditating a spring.

Discreetly retreating to the rails, the parson beckoned to one of the churchwardens, and showed him the intruder. The valiant churchwarden went for assistance, and collecting two other parishioners, they all approached the altar, armed with wooden props which they had taken from the jalousies. Cautiously the parson and his supporters stepped up to the spot where the snake was lying in the same attitude as before, and the two leading men brought their sticks down with a whack on its body. Jenny made a leap into the air worthy of her name over and in the direction of her assailants, who incontinently fled helter-skelter down the aisle, the parson's surplice and the churchwarden's coat-tails flying in the wind. A panic seized the congregation, who fled after their spiritual leader, and Jenny was left in undisputed possession of the church. When they had recovered their wind, and feeling rather ashamed of themselves, some of the boldest of the congregation re-entered the church, armed with sticks and stones to slay the intruder; but Jenny had taken advantage of their absence to make good her retreat.

Of course, my anecdotes and experiences with regard to the coloured races in the colony apply

only to the labourers and peasantry, with whom, as a magistrate, I was brought chiefly in contact.

There are a large number of highly educated black and coloured people who, except in colour, differ not at all from a similar class in England and Scotland. Some of the black barristers who practised in our Courts were singularly polite and courteous in word and manner. Of course, there were others somewhat the reverse, but none of them worse than the coarse, brow-beating practitioner at the Old Bailey. As a race, the negro is much more genial and courteous than the people of Britain; the coarseness and brutality of the miners and labourers of England are in him absent, and his manners and language are generally pleasing and decorous.

By the constitution of 1891, direct representation in the Legislative Council has been granted to the people, who have shown eagerness to avail themselves of their privileges. For the first time in its history, the Court of Policy in 1894 was entered by a pure-blooded African, who, as representative for his native county, filled his place with modesty and dignity. Once grant the principle of representation, and its logical outcome must be a preponderance of the coloured element in the Legislative Assembly. The African races are more numerous than any other, as they number more than half of the whole population of the colony. The East Indians come next in point of numbers, and ought to be represented by some educated Baboos; whilst the Portuguese, who,

although not very numerous, have a large pecuniary stake in the colony, should endeavour to obtain the election of one of their number to champion their particular interests in the Chamber.

Primary education is almost free, the cost being paid out of the public funds. Good secondary education can be obtained at a reasonable cost, whilst Queen's College supplies more ambitious youths with a good public-school training. Scholarships have been founded for creole youths, enabling them to graduate at English and Scotch universities. Under these circumstances it seems only right that the Government—or rather, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who controls the Colonies—should institute a British Guiana Civil Service, and throw open all the clerkships in the Public Service to public competition.

A dentist named Blank established himself in Georgetown, and obtained a good practice by his painless system of extracting teeth; the sign outside his surgery, "Painless Dentistry," was in itself an attraction to people suffering from toothache. One day a stalwart gold-miner entered the surgery, and said that he wanted a tooth removed, and asked the cost. He was told by Blank that ordinary extraction cost 2*s.* 6*d.*, painless extraction 5*s.* Weighing pain against pocket, the hardy miner decided upon the cheap and painful remedy. The forceps were adjusted, and with a tremendous wrench a huge molar was extracted from his jaw. Stung by the pain, the

miner started up, and struck little Blank a blow on the chest which, as he described it, half killed him; but, recovering his breath, he struck the miner a blow on his head with the steel forceps, which still held the molar, and inflicted a scalp wound two inches long. When he saw the blood trickling down the man's face Blank became alarmed, and laying down his steel weapon, he brought Friar's Balsam and lint, and bound up the wound. In the end the miner paid his 2*s.* 6*d.*, shook hands with Blank, and departed quite satisfied; but this episode could hardly be described as "Painless Dentistry."

I am sorry that I have never kept a note-book in which to jot down at the time the amusing incidents which have occurred in the various courts of justice over which I have presided. I can now only recall to my memory very few. Once a police-sergeant informed me, when I was sitting in the Police Magistrate's Court, that one of the lady prisoners was in a state of prognostication. When the prisoner was produced, it could at once be seen that she was in a state, the natural result of which could be prognosticated with perfect assurance.

Witnesses in describing their lost or injured livestock, always duplicate their words; a drake is called "duck-drake," a rooster a "fowl-cock," and a bull a "bull-cow."

Once at a police entertainment at Suddie, we were much perplexed by a worthy corporal of police, who dilated for some time to his audience on the

benefits of corporation. Being ourselves citizens of no mean city, we were willing to endorse his encomiums; but his discourse diverged considerably from his text, and became, we thought, irrelevant; until at last it dawned upon our minds that the speaker was holding forth on the advantages of co-operation.

At the same performance four black policemen, who were singing to the accompaniment of their guitars, were encored by the audience, and were so pleased with themselves that they went on playing and singing for a long time, and would have gone on till midnight, only the exasperated inspector rushed on to the platform and threatened them with all sorts of pains and penalties if they did not stop.

CHAPTER XIII.

Criminals—Murderers I have known—Causes of murder—Origin of crime —Cause of crime in British Guiana—Classification of criminals—Amount of crime—Its cause—Scarcity of women—Colonial laws—Brutal child-wife murder—Jealousy—Revenge—Execution of felons —Composure of condemned men—Brain exhaustion—Murder of Mrs. Walsh—Walsh's strange defence and behaviour—Trial and execution —Murders by Portuguese—Texeira—Excitement of his countrymen—Murders by Arabs—Cayenne—Escaped convicts—Annamese and Tonquinese criminals—Numerous languages spoken in sheriff's office —Interpreters and their manners—Russian vagrants—National odours —Executioners—Hamlet—His bungling and brutality—Execution of —Butler—Painful scene—Brown—The difficulties of a sheriff.

In recalling my past life in Guiana, it is sad to think how large a part was taken up in dealing with crime in all its aspects. The magistrate and judge, who are continually in contact with criminals, assume towards them much the same aspect as a medical man who is always combating disease. Familiarity does not breed contempt, but it softens the repulsiveness of the disease, whether mental or physical, and creates a feeling of interest in the sufferers. Having acted as Judge of the Supreme Court for twelve different periods, and three times as Attorney-General, my experience of the working of the criminal law is extensive. There are few men who can say that they have sat as Coroner

at inquests, Magistrate in Petty Sessions, represented the Crown as Attorney-General at Assizes, tried and sentenced prisoners as a Judge, and hanged a number of them as Sheriff; yet I have performed all these functions at different times.

I thought of heading one of my chapters, "Murderers I have known," for I have been brought into intimate acquaintance with about two hundred of this interesting class; and taking them altogether, I felt for them more pity than anger. As a matter of fact, murderers in British Guiana are not, as a rule, bad men; they are generally hurried into the commission of their crime by some very strong passion, such as rage, jealousy, or fear, and only in a minimum of cases are their victims slain for the purpose of sordid gain. Their private life may have been in most respects blameless, but some untoward event has thrown them off their mental balance, and compelled them, as it were, to the committal of a crime, which in their sober moments they would never have contemplated. There is no such overmastering passion as fear; in a paroxysm of terror a man will kill right and left, and is often hurried into the commission of murder to prevent the consequences of a minor offence.

There is not a crime in the statute book with which I have not had to deal, many of them too horrible even to hint at. Without law there can be no crime, so in those countries where civilization has reached its highest perfection, and where innumerable industries and luxuries require

proportionately numerous laws for their protection and development, we should expect to find the greatest amount of crime. And this would be so, if it were not that side by side with the advanced luxury and wealth there also springs up a philanthropic sentiment, a desire to mitigate and assuage the miseries of the poorer classes, a development of education, of self-control—a feeling of responsibility and love of order, which more than counteracts the criminal opportunities alluded to above. It is in societies such as existed in British Guiana, which have been, as it were, in a transitional state, having a dark background of slavery and violence, an original substratum of convicts and refugees from justice, besides an imported population of turbulent and unquiet spirits from both hemispheres, that we may expect to find the greatest development of the criminal tendency.

It is said that every nation is differentiated in criminal statistics by its tendency to certain classes of crime. To any one studying the criminal records of this colony the truth of this statement is apparent. The criminal classes, as a rule, are drawn from the lowest and poorest section of the community. It is true that no one class has a monopoly of crime. The medical man does sometimes poison his wife; the clergyman at times embezzles the Church funds; a captain of dragoons may commit suicide, and a banker forgery; but ninety-nine-hundredths of our criminals are drawn from the lowest stratum of society, and are the offspring of want, poverty, ignorance, and

moral and material filth. All generalizations are dangerous, but still I think we may concede that murder and felonious assaults in the colony were mainly committed by East Indians and Chinese; larcenies by black and coloured creoles; wounding with knives and razors by coloured Barbadians; forgeries and embezzlements by partly educated coloured creoles; breaches of the revenue laws and cheating by the Portuguese: whereas perjury, bearing false witness, profane swearing, and indecent language seem pretty evenly distributed amongst all nationalities.

The amount of crime in the colony was at one time simply appalling. Taking the population in 1885 at 270,000, I do not hesitate to say that the amount of detected crime was at least three times more than what is found in a population of similar extent in Europe.

In the year mentioned, 2319 persons were committed to gaol after conviction, the population being estimated at 270,042, which gives us 1·97 per cent. of the population committed in one year.

Now, if we turn to the criminal statistics of England and Wales for the same year, we find that out of an estimated population of 27,870,586 the number of persons committed to prison for indictable offences, and under summary convictions, amount to 174,324, or only 0·64 per cent. of the population.

The causes of this are not far to seek or difficult to explain. In the first place, the population of Guiana was principally recruited by

immigration; and our immigrants, both from the East Indies, China, and the West Indian Islands, were not the most quiet, orderly, and industrious of those countries respectively. Secondly, we inherited the curse of slavery, making our black population untruthful and dishonest. In addition, an inflaming temperature, and a national drink of a highly intoxicating nature. One prevailing cause of crime amongst our East Indian immigrants was the scarcity of women, causing jealousy, assaults, and frequently murders, to arise. An Indian kills his wife when she deserts him for another man, partly on account of jealousy and revenge, but more often because he is angry at being robbed of his jewelry, with which he has loaded her. By the law of the colony the jewelry given to the wife or mistress during cohabitation becomes her personal property, and when she leaves her husband she takes it with her.

Now, in India, if a woman commits adultery or leaves her husband for any cause, her jewelry is stripped from off her, and remains her husband's property, so that, if he loses his wife, he doesn't lose his money, which he generally values most.

The law of the colony with regard to East Indians has recently been altered, so that the deserted husband has some chance of recovering his lost property, but the number of murders from jealousy do not seem to decrease. I have described in a former chapter a case of murder from jealousy, and I could fill many chapters with such painful stories. Some of these murders were perpetrated

with a callous indifference which seems almost incredible, and can only be equalled by an infuriated Malay when running amok. Take a typical case which happened at Plantation Aurora some years ago. The victim was a pretty little girl about twelve years of age. In open daylight the husband dragged the girl to the door of his house, and with a cutlass ruthlessly hacked her to pieces, whilst her friends and acquaintances looked on as if his offence were quite an ordinary domestic incident, such as might occur in any of their families. After finishing his bloody task, the man marched to the nearest police-station, carrying the cutlass with him, and gave himself into custody, confessing the crime.

Jealousy is not the only cause of murder. The Hindoo is revengeful, and if he be injured or slighted in any way he seeks an opportunity for revenge. A singularly brutal murder was committed on Plantation Triumph on the east coast. A Hindoo woman, with her husband and two children, lived in a hut near a man named Ramdhin. Once friends, they had quarrelled over some trifling matter, and at last the dispute culminated by the woman accusing Ramdhin's son of having stolen a shilling which she had left in her house. The woman went to the police-station and laid a charge against him before the police. This so incensed Ramdhin that he went to the woman's house, cursed her roundly, and threatened her with his vengeance. Two hours afterwards the woman suckled her baby, and laid him down to sleep

under the tamarind tree, telling her daughter, a little girl of four years old, to watch her brother, whilst she herself cleaned out the house. Shortly afterwards Ramdhin came up armed with a cutlass, struck the sleeping babe with it on the head, killed it instantly, then chopped down the girl, whose shrieks brought out the mother, who was also hacked down, and, as she lay on the ground, the inhuman brute continued to strike her senseless body. Attracted by the screams, the neighbours ran up, and the man fled, but, being hotly pursued, was soon captured in a cane piece. By extraordinary good fortune the woman and girl recovered after weeks of suffering, and with injuries they will carry to their graves; the baby seems to have died at once. I tried Ramdhin myself, at the Demerara Criminal Sessions. He was convicted, and I sentenced him to death, which sentence was duly carried out.

I could multiply the stories of similar tragedies to any extent, but they would only disgust my readers; and, although time has softened the remembrance of them, yet I cannot recall them without some pain, as so many of them have been associated with certain incidents in my life which always filled me with abhorrence. As Sheriff, at one time of Essequibo and afterwards of Demerara, it was my painful duty to preside over all executions of criminals — a duty to which I always looked forward with dread, and performed with disgust.

One thing has always struck me, and that is

the composure with which men proceed to the scaffold. It is a well-known fact that most condemned people sleep well the night before their execution, and eat a hearty breakfast when awakened to their last morning on earth. I think that this sleep is the sleep of exhausted brain-power—the terrible agitation and suspense to which they have been subjected for weeks, perhaps months, has completely exhausted them, and they pass into a state of apathy and almost thoughtlessness, which passes for courage. Their eyes, before the fatal cap obscures them, have, in most cases, a curious far-away expression, as if they were only dimly conscious of their immediate surroundings; and, although they talk calmly and rationally, their voices have the effect as of one talking in his sleep. I am the more confirmed in this impression by the conduct of men who have been reprieved at the last moment. They seem to wake as from a trance; it takes them some time to grasp the meaning of the words they have heard, and, when it does dawn upon them, they become violently agitated, tremble all over, and often burst into tears.

Of all the crimes that came under my immediate cognizance, none made a greater impression upon me at the time than one which occurred in 1885. There was a married couple named Walsh living in Georgetown. The husband was a quadroon, well-educated and good-looking, and about twenty-eight or thirty years of age; his wife was a handsome young Portuguese woman, who was

employed as a nurse at the Public Hospital. Walsh had himself been employed at the hospital, but had been discharged for some irregularity.

There can be no doubt that Mrs. Walsh was not a woman of good character, and, her infidelities coming to the ears of her husband, he had been heard to threaten her with violence. He did not live regularly at home, but left his wife for different periods of time as his work kept him away, and Mrs. Walsh took advantage of his absence to entertain her numerous admirers. One night Mrs. Walsh retired to her bedroom about the usual time; the next morning she was found foully murdered. When the matter was reported to the police, I was immediately communicated with. The Inspector-General called for me, and drove me to the house where the body of the woman was lying, which presented the most horrible sight I ever gazed on. One look was enough for us, and we fled pale and gasping into the open air. A jury had been assembled, who were sworn *super visum corporis*, and I was glad to adjourn the inquiry and get away from the place altogether.

Suspicion was immediately aroused against the husband. He was arrested some hours afterwards, and, after a long and painstaking examination, he was committed for trial at the Supreme Criminal Court. During all the time between his arrest and committal Walsh preserved a reckless demeanour; he smiled in the dock, and nodded to his friends, and when he was committed he

called out to them to send him his new patent-leather shoes to wear at his trial. Before me Walsh always asserted that his wife had committed suicide; but the doctors all agreed that it was impossible for a woman to have inflicted such a wound on herself, as it penetrated all the muscles and organs of the neck right down to the backbone, and must have been inflicted with considerable force, and by a very sharp instrument. Besides, there were the bloody footprints on the floor which corresponded in size with Walsh's feet; and it was manifestly impossible that the poor woman could have cut her throat in the way described, and then washed her hands in the basin and wiped them on the towel. Counsel was engaged by Walsh in his defence, but his lawyer refused to conduct the defence on these lines, and threw up his brief.

In the end another barrister was engaged, but his hands were tied by the extraordinary line which his client insisted upon taking in his own defence, so the result was a foregone conclusion. If Walsh had taken the advice of his first lawyer, by admitting the murder and pleading that, aware of his wife's infidelities, he had watched the house, seen her lover enter, and then, surprising them *in flagrante delicto*, had slain her in his wrath, the result, as far as he was concerned, might have been different. I have adverted in another place to the sympathy which the East Indians have with the injured husband who chops up his adulterous wife; much the same feeling exists

amongst the black and coloured people, and all the populace in this case sympathized with "poor Bobby Walsh." His wife, also, was one of the hated Portuguese, who had deserted her lawful husband to intrigue with "white men."

In the condemned cell, Walsh, who was a Roman Catholic, was most assiduously attended by Father Rigby, a young zealous Jesuit priest, who entreated him to make a full confession, and receive the absolution of the Church, but without avail.

On the morning fixed for the execution, I proceeded to the prison, and having read the Governor's warrant to him, I asked Walsh if he acknowledged the justice of the sentence. "No," he replied, "I am innocent of the suicide of Louisa Walsh." I looked at Father Rigby, who was standing by the convict with a crucifix in his hand and reading from his book of prayers. He shook his head; so the dismal procession was formed to the scaffold.

So great was the sympathy expressed for Walsh, and the excitement over his conviction and approaching execution, that I had thought it desirable to ask the Inspector-General for an extra police guard; so, besides the usual police round the scaffold, a strong body patrolled round the prison walls, commanded by inspectors on horseback. When Walsh stood upon the fatal drop, and the white cap was being drawn over his face, he said he wanted to speak. Thinking he was about to confess to the devoted priest,

who was kneeling before him on the scaffold holding aloft the crucifix, I told the executioner to raise the cap, but as soon as his head was free, the wretched man began to curse me, the judge who tried him, the inspector of police in charge of the guard, and said he would soon meet us all in hell. Horrified and disgusted, I gave the signal to the executioner to proceed, the cap was readjusted, the lever pulled, and the miserable man was launched into eternity. With streaming eyes the good priest asserted that as the bolt was drawn Walsh called out, "I confess I am guilty." I was not near enough to hear him if he had said it; let us hope he did.

The Portuguese in the colony had an impression that, as capital punishment was not inflicted in Portugal, they could not be hanged in British Guiana, but this impression was rudely dispelled.

The first execution of a Portuguese for murder occurred in Essequibo, when I was Sheriff in that county. He was a man named Texeira, who had a handsome young wife, who was not much attached to him, she having been married to him without consulting her wishes. She went to visit some friends in Essequibo, and although her husband, who lived in Georgetown, sent to her twice asking her to return to him, she took no notice. So Texeira came down by the steamer from town, and going to the place where his wife was staying, he met her sitting and sewing in her friend's gallery. He asked her whether she

would return with him to town. She replied, "No, I won't." "Then take that!" he cried out; and snatching a large butcher's knife out of his shirt, he plunged it into her bosom, killing her dead upon the spot.

He was tried and sentenced to death in due course, and was executed, despite the efforts of the Portuguese, who telegraphed to their ambassador in London, the Duke de Saldanha, petitioned the Governor, and made strenuous efforts for his reprieve.

One of the most frightful murders ever perpetrated in the colony was by some Algerian Arabs, but this happened when I was in India, so I have no personal recollection of it. It may be asked how these Algerian Arabs came into Demerara. By a somewhat roundabout way. Cayenne, the ill-omened French colony, is only separated from British Guiana by the small Dutch colony called Surinam; so the convicts who escape in boats find their way thither, as it lies to leeward, and both wind and current carry them to our shores. At Cayenne there are many Arabs who have been deported thither, having been condemned for manslaughter, robbery with violence, and other serious crimes in Algeria. In former days the French Government was glad to get rid of these wretches, and made no effort to reclaim them; but, owing to the representations of the English Government, they are more strict now. All suspected fugitive criminals are arrested as soon as they land upon our shores, and are

taken before a magistrate, who, if he is not satisfied with their explanations as to where they come from, commits them to prison for safe custody. The Governor then communicates with the French Governor in Cayenne, and, after considerable delay and much red tapeism, the convicts are demanded and given up to the French authorities.

Besides Arabs, we occasionally got Annamese and Tonquinese criminals, who had been sent to Cayenne from the French possessions in the Malay Peninsula. My old friend the Inspector-General was often driven to his wits' end to obtain interpreters for the magistrate's court. My position was not a sinecure from a linguistic point of view. Portuguese, Hindi, Tamil, Norwegian, French, and Chinese were almost daily spoken in my court; but when it came to Arabic, Russian, Annamese, and Tonquinese, we were sometimes nonplussed. On one occasion, with great pride, the Inspector-General produced a Chinaman, who, he asserted, understood the Annamese language; but then Johnny couldn't talk English at all, so another Chinaman was found who said he understood our mother tongue, and the examination was conducted as follows: The magistrate asked a question in English; Chinaman No. 1, having after some difficulty grasped the meaning of the words, says something in Chinese to Chinaman No. 2, who in his turn said something in an unknown tongue to the Annamese prisoners. After some delay, the

Annamese, not apparently understanding very clearly what the Chinaman No. 2 says, mutter something, which Chinaman No. 2 repeats to Chinaman No. 1, who replies in English to the magistrate; but the answer sometimes bears no connection with the question, so the whole process has to be gone over again, not without some heat on the part of the magistrate, who has perhaps fifty cases waiting for trial, and the thermometer standing at 88° Fahr. in the shade, and the air strongly flavoured with *bouquet d'Afrique*.

It is a curious thing how all nations seem to have a smell peculiar to themselves. If I were blindfolded and brought into contact with different men, I could tell their nationality by their odour. Hindoos smell of ghee and coconut oil; Portuguese, of garlic; Chinese, of opium; aboriginal Indians have a peculiar sour smell; and the black man exhales from his skin a powerful musky odour. But even these differ very much. We have had servants, pure black in colour, who had no scent at all; others were almost unbearable. The Chinese make the same complaint about Europeans, and say that we all have a disagreeable smell like sheep. Certainly the smells in a ragged school in London on a rainy day are anything but agreeable.

On another occasion four Russians were brought before me on a charge of vagrancy. It was with difficulty we could find any one in the colony acquainted with their lingo, until it was discovered that a lady, the wife of one of the

merchants in Georgetown, had resided in Russia, and could converse in the Russian tongue. On application to her, she kindly agreed to interpret for me. The tale these Russians told was almost incredible, as they asserted that they had come to the colony from inland, having found their way from the head of the Amazon River, up the Rio Negro, and walked across country until they struck the waters of the Upper Demerara River. A glance at the map of South America will show that such a journey was not impossible, but it was highly improbable, and I didn't believe it myself.

Executions are now managed in the colony so expeditiously and with such certainty, that it seems incredible such scenes as the following could have been enacted. At an execution at Suddie, in February, 1873, when the bolt was drawn the man dropped so that his feet touched the ground, and in that position the poor wretch writhed and struggled until he was raised up by some of the prisoners (present to witness the execution as a moral object-lesson) high enough to allow Hamlet, the executioner, to take a few turns of the slack of the rope round a pin in the cross-beam of the gallows. This supplementary work done, the man was dropped again to hang until life was slowly choked out of him. In the confusion the cap dropped off his face, and the awful contortions of the exposed features during the death-struggle were utterly indescribable. When Hamlet was remonstrated with for his inhuman

bungling, he resented the interference, and remarked that the man was dead all the same.

In another case, a young man named Butler was hanged for shooting his employer, Mr. Austin, and in falling through the drop the knot of the rope partially gave way. His struggles were fearful to observe, and his agony appeared to be intense. "It's all right," said Hamlet; but when the man's struggles ceased and life seemed to be extinct, the knot gave way, and Butler fell to the ground. He was still alive, and on being lifted up exclaimed, "Oh, my God!" They carried the wretched man up again on to the scaffold, and, with most mistaken kindness, gave him brandy, so that he became conscious, and exclaimed, "For God's sake, make haste and finish it." He was then hanged a second time—this time, fortunately, with effect.

After these experiences Hamlet was dismissed and another hangman appointed in his place. I remember once being in a great fright. At Suddie, in Essequibo, a man lay in the gaol, under sentence of death, to be executed on a Saturday at 9 a.m. I had received the Governor's warrant, commanding me, "at my peril," to hang the wretched man at the time and place mentioned. The steamer arrived on Friday from town, but no executioner. I sent for Mr. Blackman, the keeper of the gaol, but he had heard nothing about him, so I was in a terrible fix. About 5 p.m., a man walked up the steps of my gallery. I didn't recognize him, so I said, "Who are you?"

"I am Brown, the hangman," he replied. I jumped up, delighted. "Come along, my man;" and I led the way straight off to the prison, Brown, who seemed rather tipsy, following me, till we were safe inside. "Now, Mr. Blackman," I said to the keeper, "here is Brown, and you don't let him out of this gaol until that man is safely and properly executed." Brown began to bluster and swear, but I said, "No; you can have what you like to eat, and one pint of beer; but out of this gaol you don't go to-night." I was determined that he should be sober in the morning, which he was; and, although he went about his work sulkily, he performed his repulsive task with his usual celerity.

CHAPTER XIV.

Moral education—Filthy dwellings of the poor—Corporation of Georgetown—Want of benefactors—Paul de Saffon—Trotman—Disapproval of criminals—Its absence—Bantus—Immorality—Concubinage—Industrial schools—Whipping—Flogging as a deterrent—A careless warder—Jack in office—A hopeless case—Female obstinacy—Burglary—Blackman—Betrayed by a woman—An ingenious thief—Death by lightning—Curious results—A jealous Mohammedan—Mutilation—A strange case—Murder without a motive—An injured damsel—Her revenge—The biter bit.

Want of education is one of the great factors in the manufacture of criminals; and when I say education I don't mean teaching the three R's, of which there is too much already in the colony, but education in the sense of teaching the people decency, cleanliness, modesty, honesty, and thrift. It is impossible to expect respectable men and women to grow up out of the moral cesspools in which they are bred and reared. Let any one walk through the yards which lead out of Lower Regent Street, Lombard Street, and Leopold Street in Georgetown, and let him ask himself how he could expect respectable, law-abiding citizens to be raised therein.

Rents in the city are very high, and there is a

class of landlords who seem to think that their only duty is to wring out of their wretched tenants as much money as they can get, and yet that they have no obligations to meet in return. It is a common thing to find the rent of one wretched room, opening on to a yard full of slush and mud, undrained, permeated with foul odours, to be two dollars and a half (10*s*.) a month, or more. To meet this sum the tenant takes in as many people to lodge with her as she can get, who pay her perhaps a shilling a week each; and so half a dozen people of both sexes and all ages sleep together in a place whose cubic capacity would hardly supply enough air for two adults. It is horrible to see, as I have seen, the dense population that exists in some of the yards I have mentioned. In such places, in such a manner of life, is it to be wondered at that all decency is openly disregarded? that the most violent rows, the most filthy language are the daily *pabulum* of the inhabitants, both young and old?

Surely the Corporation of Georgetown, composed as it is of practical, clear-headed, and philanthropic men, should turn their attention to these foul cesspools, and insist that landlords should be compelled to make their yards and houses well-drained and habitable, and should prevent the over-crowding of houses by such regulations as are in force in the large towns in England. Surely some of our great planters and merchants who have made fortunes out of the colony might imitate, on a smaller scale, the noble Peabody, and

erect some model lodging-houses for our poor people. Three men only, Paul de Saffon, Samuel Blandford Trotman, and William Mitchell, have left charitable bequests to their poorer brethren, and their names will to all time be accompanied by the blessings of the widow and fatherless.

One great object of education is to make the public understand that all crime is detrimental to their interests as members of a social state, and to make them disapprovers of criminals. Public disapprobation has a more deterrent effect in rooting out crime than any amount of legal punishment. If the people generally were distinctly hostile to offenders, it would assist justice immeasurably in catching and punishing criminals. "An enlightened people are a better auxiliary to a judge than an army of policemen." But, unfortunately, amongst the poorer classes public disapprobation of criminals, especially when they are thieves, can hardly be said to exist; on the contrary, if the victims belong to the richer classes, more sympathy is shown than disapprobation. They consider property as a benefit in which they have no share, and that the rich are the natural prey of the poor, so that, instead of being an assistant to justice, the lower classes throw every obstacle in the way of the suppression of crime and the punishment of offenders. Even respectable people of the poorer classes, who would themselves shrink from theft, will at the same time screen one of their own order who is pursued by the officers of justice for an offence against property, rather than

incur the opprobrium which, in their class, always attaches to the name of informer.

The opinion of the masses is well expressed in a cartoon in the *Argosy*, where two women, talking together, say, "Ouw! she too wicked to tell pon de gal dat she tooket de money. But for she de por gal would not have gone to gaol." "It too distressin'! De wicked woman should have kept she mout' shut, for de lady could well afford to lose de money."

It is a pity that the coloured creoles of the colony do not imitate their ancestors in Africa, for it is told of the Bantus that by their law every one accused of crime was held guilty until he could prove himself innocent. The head of a family was responsible for the conduct of all its branches; the kraal collectively in the same manner for each resident in it; and the clan for each of its sub-divisions.

Thus, if the skin of a stolen ox was found in a kraal, or if the footmarks of the animal were traced to it, the whole of the residents were liable to be fined. There was no such thing as a man professing ignorance of his neighbour's doings; the law required him to know all about them, and it made him suffer for neglecting a duty which it held that he owed to the community. Every individual was not only in theory, but in practice a policeman. (See "The Portuguese in South Africa," by Theal.)

Crime and immorality go often hand in hand. Not that immoral persons, who break what are

called the moral and social laws, are necessarily criminals, but the practice of immorality in its broadest sense has a tendency to weaken the mental discrimination between what is evil and what is good, and so disintegrates the moral fibre of a man's constitution, as to make him more susceptive of influences which tend to criminal expression.

It is obvious that the herding together of people of all ages and both sexes in ill-ventilated and badly drained rooms must tend to produce disease both of mind and body—disease of body by inhaling foul air, by contagion, by want of sufficient breathing space, and other causes; disease of mind, by contamination of the less depraved and younger people by the indecency and impurity both in words and actions of the older and more depraved. Similarly, the unhealthy lives of a nation or colony may equally tend to produce a low ideal of social life, which may weaken the moral fibre of its people to the results above mentioned.

The marriage laws of the colony are, as I have said before, of such a nature as to put a premium upon vice and concubinage, and to throw every obstacle in the way of early and virtuous connections between the sexes. The old Roman Dutch law, which enables parties that have lived together in concubinage for years to marry and at the same time legitimate their children, so as to place them in the same position legally as children born after marriage, has been most fatal in its results upon female chastity. Very little disgrace attaches to

a woman who lives with one man in recognized concubinage, so long as the man is sole and unmarried, and able at any time to consummate their nuptials. But it is a matter of common observation that where the few maintain this relationship, which, if rigidly kept, is certainly not the most disgraceful life, intact, too frequently infidelity on the one side leads to jealousy and subsequent infidelity on the other; illicit polyandry succeeds to the previous concubinage, and from polyandry to prostitution is, under our institutions, a step more distinguishable in name than in reality.

An attempt has been made to check the increase of crime by the reformation of juvenile criminals. The Industrial School at Onderneeming has been opened since 1879, and has certainly been, in one way, a great success; but I very much doubt whether, in many instances, the boys are trained from crime. Too frequently we find them falling back into their old courses, mingling with their old associates, and entering into a bolder and more reckless career of vice and crime, ending too often in a convict cell at Massaruni. Where numbers of bad boys are brought together, they mutually contaminate each other. The *morale* of the school is very low, and although everything is done to teach the boys decency, industry, and morality, very few, I fear, practise them when away from their master's eye.

The girls' reformatory which has been established offers still greater difficulties than the other. Amongst the abandoned young women who form

its inmates it would seem impossible to hope that any blossom of purity or industry could survive. At the most we may hope that the matron may be able in time to inculcate some degree of self-control; to make the girls more outwardly decent in word and gesture; to train them to habits of industry and cleanliness, and teach them to sew and wash, so that when they are discharged they will be able to gain an honest livelihood, without sinking back into the infamy from which they were rescued.

It is a great misfortune that our officials in high places have such a strong objection to whipping as a punishment; there is nothing more effective, nothing cheaper. From all time a man's skin has been his most treasured possession. Job lost children and wealth with comparative patience, but Satan, knowing human nature, said to God, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life;" and when poor Job was smitten with sore boils all over his skin, he cursed the day of his birth. There is nothing that has such terrors for both black and East Indian people as the cat-o'-nine-tails. I know of my own knowledge that criminals regard a sentence of penal servitude with indifference, who cringe with terror at the thought of the cat, especially if the flogging were ordered to take place in public on the estate where the crime was committed. But the philanthropists say, "It is so degrading." How can one degrade an habitual thief or burglar, a murderous garroter, a woman-chopper? It is not any degradation he feels when under the lash; it is the pain

—the keen whipcord cutting into his flesh and making him yell with agony—it is that which he dreads. But he, for his part, never thought of the pain which he inflicted on the unfortunate old man whom he had garroted, or the delicate woman whom he hacked all over with his sharp cutlass. Brutes should be treated as brutes, and the whip is the only argument that appeals to their feelings.

Flogging is a punishment only to be inflicted for serious offences, but it has a wonderful effect in diminishing crime. I will give two examples, which are well known to all old colonists. The plantain, or banana, as it is called in the islands, is the staple food of the colony. The people always plant it in preference to any other vegetable, and the failure of the crop from any cause is a serious matter for the whole population. At one time a number of idle, dissolute men, who were too lazy to work for themselves, used to prowl around the plantain walks and rob their more industrious brethren. This became such a nuisance that the poor farmers refused to plant any more plantains for others to eat; so a serious scarcity of provisions might have been the result. To prevent, if possible, such a contingency, an ordinance was passed through the local Parliament, authorizing the magistrates to sentence any men found stealing plantains to be flogged on the scene of their depredations.

This law was carried out by the magistrates, and plantain-stealing in a year or so became an extinct crime.

Again, it was an evil custom of many of the negroes, especially Barbadians, when they frequented the races and other crowded meetings, to carry razors, which they doubled back, and with which, almost concealed in their clenched hands, they used to wipe, as they called it, any one with whom they might have a quarrel. These wipes were inflicted with such rapidity, and the razors were so sharp, that the unfortunate victim was often unaware that he had received any injury, until he saw himself bleeding, and found that he had been severely cut. These cowardly and brutal assaults became so common that the judges of the Supreme Court determined to flog any man who was convicted of using the razor in the way described. This wholesome severity stamped out the crime in a short time, and for years the races were held without a single case of razor-cutting being brought before the magistrate.

Necessary though it may be, flogging is not a pleasant spectacle. I remember on one occasion a notorious vagabond was being flogged in Suddie Gaol. The warder who wielded the cat was laying it on with vigour and science; the wretched man on the triangles writhed and groaned, and shouted and swore. After the full complement had been administered, the warders were ordered to take the man down from the triangles; but proceeding in a careless and unbusiness-like manner, they loosened one of his hands without securing it behind him. Maddened with pain and rage, the convict, as soon as he found his hand free, struck

straight at a warder with his clenched fist, and felled him to the ground, and it took several men to overpower him, put him in irons, and remove him to his cell. The warder who was knocked down lodged a complaint against the prisoner for assaulting him in the execution of his duty; but I refused to entertain it, and told the warder that he was rightly punished for his carelessness.

On one occasion, when the Inspector-General of Police was responsible for carrying out the sentences of flogging, it happened that three men were to be flogged in different parts of the colony some distance apart, on the same day.

The senior inspector, who was deputed to look after the execution of the sentence, was somewhat perplexed, as his two professional floggers were engaged, and a third was required at an estate some eight miles from town across the river. Driving down Water Street towards the ferry, the inspector saw a stout white sailor rolling along the pavement, so, stopping his waggon, he hailed him and said, "My man, do you want to earn five dollars?" "Aye, aye, sir." "Then jump up behind my waggon." The man obeyed. When they arrived at the ferry, the sailor asked the inspector, "Sir, what do you want me to do?" "Never you mind," said the inspector, "you come with me." They crossed the river in the steamer, and drove up the west bank to Toevlugt Police Station, where they found the police guard drawn up, the triangles in position, and the prisoner ready to be strapped. "Now, my man," said the

inspector to the sailor, "I want you to flog this man, and I will give you five dollars." "Oh, is that all?" said Jack; "then I'm your man," as he took off his coat, and spat on his hands. The prisoner was strapped up, and Jack gave him three dozen in a good man-o'-war's style; in fact, as the inspector told me, he never saw a man better flogged in his life. The sailor was taken back to town, and was presented with his five dollars. "Thank ye, sir," said he. "What, five dollars for licking a nigger? Why, I'd have done it for nothing." And all the time he remained in the port this man was looking out for the inspector, touching his cap and saying, "Any more jobs for me this morning, sir?"

The cat cannot be safely used on the backs of many of the East Indians, as they are often very thin and their spleens much enlarged, so that a blow with a heavy instrument might rupture the spleen and cause immediate death. I was once in despair how to manage a man in Suddie prison, who defied all my efforts to make him obey the prison rules. He was a delicate Hindoo, and the surgeon would not allow the man to be flogged, nor placed on bread and water, nor shut up in a dark cell; so, taking advantage of this immunity from punishment, the man defied the authorities, and we could do nothing with him. At last I hit upon an idea; and I told the keeper of the gaol to have made a harlequin suit of red and yellow, the legs and arms of alternate colours and the body in four squares of red and yellow.

When the prison gang went out to work, the man was clothed in the suit, and sent out with the others. His appearance created a sensation in the village; all the children ran alongside the gang crying out, "What this man do? He too bad man for true! Hi! look at he coat!" Every one pointed and laughed at him as he passed, and his fellow prisoners jeered at him. This ridicule and jeering was more than the poor man could endure; so a few days afterwards, when I was visiting the prison, he fell upon his face at my feet and implored me to remove the coloured suit, which I agreed to do on his promising amendment in his conduct. He promised, and kept his word; but this did not prevent him from lodging a complaint against me before the Governor, when His Excellency inspected the prison some weeks afterwards. However, on hearing all the facts of the case, His Excellency told him that he was glad that the Sheriff had found a means of subduing his mind without injuring his body.

On another occasion a female prisoner at Suddie gave me much trouble. She always amused herself by tearing up her prison clothes, and dancing a sort of can-can in *puris naturalibus*. Twice she did this, and twice new clothes were given to her. Bread and water and dark cell had no effect upon her. The matron was in despair, so I told her that, if the woman tore up her clothes again, she was to be left in her cell without any. Soon afterwards our friend broke out again, tore up her clothes, yelled and danced in her cell till

she was tired. Next morning no notice was taken of her, food was brought as usual, and the rags removed, and she was left in her cell naked. The weather happened to be rather cold and wet for Essequibo, so she soon began to howl; but she was left thirty-six hours without clothes, and they were only given to her on her imploring for them, and with a notification that, if she tore up those, no more would be forthcoming. She never tore up any more.

Epidemics of burglary break out in Georgetown at different times. It is generally discovered that all the crimes are committed by two or three men, usually ex-convicts, and when these are caught the burglaries cease.

In the year 1887 the city was disturbed by a series of daring and clever burglaries; every night some house was entered, and valuable property removed. The thieves were cool hands, as they generally regaled themselves with wine, and spirits, and any cold meat which they discovered. The police inspectors were entirely baffled—the policemen were some of them in league with the criminals. One of the most notorious of the burglars was Charles Blackman, who had recently returned from Her Majesty's Penal Settlement on the Massaruni River. He was an intelligent, quick, strong Barbadian, who, for a long time, defied all the efforts of the police inspectors for his capture. He might never have been caught, but he shared the fate of Jack Sheppard, Dick Turpin, and many other notorious criminals, and was betrayed by a

woman. He lived with a woman named Hester Nightingale, and when Inspector Wright, who was then at the head of the detective department, discovered the fact, he immediately took steps to bribe the woman to betray her companion.

At first she was impracticable, gave false information, or warned Blackman of his danger.

One day she told Wright that Blackman was going out at 1 a.m. on a particular night to commit a burglary, and that he would return about an hour afterwards with the swag. Wright and a sergeant of detectives stole quietly into the barrack where Blackman lived, soon after 1 a.m., and sat down to wait the return of the convict.

They sat for hours; no one came. At 5 o'clock, tired of waiting, they sallied out, and, as Wright was lighting his pipe on the doorstep, Blackman put his head out of a window above him, and called out, "Morning, Wright! How d'ye? Hope you have had a pleasant time." A few days afterwards I met him in front of the Georgetown Club. He stopped me, and said, "Now, Sheriff, how can a man lead an honest life? Look here!" —pointing up Main Street,—"there's one bl——y policeman watching me; and there"—pointing down High Street—"is another bl——y policeman watching me; they are at it all day and night." I asked him why he didn't go to the gold diggings. "How can I go to the gold diggings when I have no money to pay my passage?" "Well, Blackman," I said, "I will give you a chance. If I give you money and pay your way to Bartica, will

you go?" "So 'elp me God, Sheriff, I will go." So I foolishly gave him half a crown. Two nights afterwards my own house was burgled by two men —Blackman and another, I believe; and if it had not been for my little dog Lion they would have cleaned me out. At last an increased bribe bought over Hester Nightingale; she gave true information, and Blackman was caught after a daring and successful burglary at Hugh Sproston's house. When Mr. Wright interviewed him, and amongst other things told him that he had also broken into the Sheriff's house, he replied, "No, Mr. Wright; I respect the Sheriff too much. I wouldn't do such a thing." But I believe he did, all the same.

I was burgled three times during my residence in the colony: twice in Georgetown, and once at Zorg in Essequibo. In no case were the thieves detected, nor the property recovered.

I once tried a man at Capoey court, in Essequibo, for an ingenious form of larceny. We all know the American yarn about chicken thieves, how the black man could not account for the chickens found in his hat, and "guessed they crawled up his leg." My friend at Capoey was a Hindoo, who was the proud possessor of a fine game-cock, so his *modus operandi* was as follows. Having armed his fowl with sharp steel spurs, he proceeded to a creole village, and, squatting down in a bush near the cottages, he tied the game-cock to a stake by a piece of string, and then retired a little way to await results. Left to himself, the

gamecock began to crow lustily. The cocks belonging to the village, hearing a strange challenge, pricked up their ears, and the nearest one immediately rushed off to expel the insolent intruder. In the contest that ensued the unarmed bird was quickly slain by his better provided antagonist. In this way two or three cocks were killed, whose bodies were carefully placed in a bag by the wily Hindoo, who, picking up his bird, proceeded to other hunting-grounds. A dozen or more fowls would be obtained in this way in a single day, and it was some time before the thief was detected.

I have noticed some very curious results from the effects of lightning. Two coolies working on Plantation Farm were killed by lightning, and when the post-mortem was held, it was found that their blood was still fluid, although the men had been dead for some hours. Another East Indian labourer was killed in the same way, and when, as coroner, I viewed the body, I found that the steel prongs of the fork, which the man had been working with at the time, had burnt corresponding marks across his abdomen. A thunderstorm burst over Georgetown. In one of the yards of the city a woman was standing at the door of her house with a baby in her arms, and a little girl holding on to her dress. A flash of lightning felled them to the ground, killing the woman and the girl; but the baby, although stunned, eventually recovered. The same shock started the iron bands round a large water-vat in the same yard, driving them all an inch upwards, so that all the water escaped out

of the vat. I have seen men killed by the electric fluid show no mark at all on their bodies; the clothes of others are torn to rags, and all the hair burnt off their bodies.

In a former chapter I have described the mutilation of his wife by an East Indian, who cut off her arm and threw it in her face. A somewhat similar offence was committed by another Mohammedan at Aurora, whom I tried at the Supreme Criminal Court at Suddie, in February, 1895. It is a common practice for Mohammedan husbands who are jealous of their wives to mutilate them by cutting off their hands, breasts, or noses. Booddrudin, the man in question, was a new immigrant, having arrived, together with his wife, Nijibun Nisa, about six months previously. They seem to have lived amicably together, with only the usual bickerings not uncommon amongst married couples, until, one night, for no apparent reason, Booddrudin mutilated his wife in a most brutal fashion.

At the trial, the victim related her woes in a most matter-of-fact manner. After describing her life with the accused for some weeks, she stated that one Wednesday she went to work as usual, and returned to her home about 6 p.m. "Accused," she said, "told me to fetch my rations. I didn't do so. Mooteeram brought my rations. I saw my husband in the house. I met him there. I gave him something to eat—we were quite happy together. I went to bed at 8 p.m., the accused came to bed in the same room, in separate cots. There was no quarrel between

us. I went to sleep. The next thing I remember, about 12 o'clock, I was awakened. I found my husband sitting on my chest, and he takes my hands and puts them under my legs; and held them firm with his legs; he then held my nose with his left hand, and with his right hand he cut off my nose—it was very painful—with his cutlass. I felt pain, I began to cry out to Mooteeram, who lives with his wife in the next room, 'This man killing me!'" Mooteeram called assistance, broke open the door of Booddrudin's room, and had him arrested. When the constable asked Booddrudin what had become of his wife's nose, he replied, "I cut it off and threw it into the bush, for in this country the doctor can put back the nose." The medical officer for the district deposed that the nose of the unfortunate woman had been completely cut off, and that she would be disfigured for life. It is also a great disgrace for a Mohammedan woman to be so treated, as it marks her for life as an adulteress. The prisoner made no defence, and, on conviction, I sentenced him to four years' penal servitude, and twenty lashes with a cat, which I think he richly deserved.

Sometimes a murder is committed for which it seems impossible to find a motive, neither from revenge, jealousy, nor any other apparent cause. A man named Chotki was tried before me in Georgetown for the murder of one coolie boy, and the attempted murder of another. These boys had been on the most friendly terms with the accused, and no motive could be suggested for his

actions; yet he went with the boys to the waterside to collect firewood, and there attacked them most brutally with a cutlass, killing one and severely wounding the other. The smaller boy, Ramlall, who escaped death, gave a graphic account of the scene.

"We went together to gather wood. When we had finished packing wood, prisoner came up with a piece of wood which he had cut, and he put it on the top of the bundle. He told us to tie the bundle: myself and my brother were tying the bundle. We had finished tying the bundle, and were looking for more wood; when we had finished, he told us to tie that. As we were doing so, he fired a blow with his cutlass at me. The blow got me on my left hand. I lift up my hand to ward off the blow: it got me there. Prisoner said nothing. I said nothing. We had no quarrel—we didn't abuse him. When I got the cut, I started running to the dam. As I started to run, the prisoner gave me another cut in my back with the cutlass. My brother started off to run into the bush. Chotki ran after my brother—caught him, and cut him, and killed him. I saw him holding my brother. I heard my brother holler out after Chotki held him. He called out, 'Oh, my brother! Oh, my brother!'"

The dead body of the slain boy Soomaliah was found in the dam. He was only fourteen years old; Ramlall was about eleven. The wretched Chotki went to Vigilance, the nearest police-station, and gave himself up to the sentry, telling him, "I have killed one boy." "He seemed," the sentry said

in his evidence, "quite sober, but melancholy; and said he must do what is written."

When he was taken and shown the body of his victim he wept. The whole matter was inexplicable.

Women will sometimes go any lengths to avenge themselves on a man who has slighted them. *Quid non furens fœmina possit?* But in one case in my recollection a woman over-reached herself in her intended vengeance, and brought condign punishment upon her own head.

There was a man, whom we will call Sellmore, living in Georgetown, who was a notorious scoundrel, always fighting, assaulting peaceable citizens—a sort of bravo, hired by cowards to chastise their enemies. This man had, of course, divers amours, and one of his deserted ladies vowed vengeance against him. One day a police-constable was attracted by cries of "Murder!" and, running to the spot from whence the sounds proceeded, he found Sellmore in Brickdam Street, struggling to get away from a woman, who had her arms tight round his neck, and screaming "Murder! murder!" at the top of her voice. The woman was bleeding from a severe scalp wound, and her face and the front of her dress were covered with fresh blood. The police-constable arrested them both, and took them to the Central Police Station, where the woman charged the man Sellmore with assaulting and wounding her.

The next day Sellmore was brought before me. He protested his innocence, and swore that he

had never touched the woman, that she rushed out of a yard with her head cut, seized hold of him, and began to yell "Murder!" Knowing his character, I was not disposed to believe this story; but something in the man's manner arrested my attention, and I remanded him for a week. Some other facts leaked out, which justified me in a further remand, by which time the police had detected the real facts of the case.

It was proved by the clearest evidence that this woman had conspired with another woman to get Sellmore into trouble. Living in a yard in Brickdam Street, down which he always passed in the morning, they waited one day till he came in sight, the accomplice with an empty brandy-bottle in her hand. "Now strike me!" said the slighted one, and her friend gave her a violent crack over the head with the bottle, which, as it broke, inflicted a severe scalp wound, much severer than the recipient bargained for. With the blood streaming from the wound dyeing her face and clothes, she rushed into the street, threw her arms round the astonished Sellmore, and yelled "Murder! murder!" at the top of her voice. Naturally, the man tried to throw her off, and, in the struggle, was arrested by the police. These facts were clearly proved by eye-witnesses, so Sellmore was discharged, and I committed his quondam friend and her accomplice to the Supreme Court, where they were convicted of wilful and corrupt perjury, and sent to prison for twelve months each.

CHAPTER XV.

Bishop Austin—Consecration of new cathedral—His farewell address—Climate of British Guiana—Educational difficulties—Curse of tropical service—Planters' troubles—Fall in price of sugar—Bounty-fed beet—The immigration system—The East Indian at home—Change for the better—His position in Demerara—Magistrates' Courts—Oriental imagery—Famine in India—Plenty in British Guiana—Malingerers—A paradise for the poor—Village communities—Colonial peasantry—Gold industry—Diamonds—How to make British Guiana prosperous.

Of all the personages with whom I was brought in contact during my residence in British Guiana, none excited my admiration and affection so much as the late Lord Bishop of Guiana, William Piercy Austin. I had the good fortune to carry letters of introduction to him when I first went to the colony, and he was always my greatest and most respected friend until his death in 1892.

The future bishop was born at a small inn in Stone, Staffordshire, on the 7th of November, 1807. He was a son of the Honourable William Austin, of Plantation Land of Plenty, in Essequibo, and in his youth spent some years in the colony. He was educated at Hyde Abbey School, near Winchester, from whence he proceeded to Exeter College, Oxford. When at Oxford he was a "wet bob," and formed that interest in rowing which

he always maintained throughout his life. (One of his sons, W. G. G. Austin, of Magdalen College, Oxford, rowed in the 'Varsity race at Putney.) He took his degree in 1830, was ordained deacon in 1831, and admitted to the priesthood by the Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1833. Visiting his paternal estates in Guiana, he was persuaded by Bishop Coleridge, of Barbados, to throw in his lot with the colony, and he accepted the position of Rural Dean of Essequibo, a post in which he was succeeded by his cousin, the Rev. William Austin, who remained there as dean during nearly the whole of his cousin's episcopate.

In 1837 he was made Archdeacon of Demerara, and when the colony of British Guiana was, for ecclesiastical purposes, separated from Barbados, he was selected as the first bishop of the new see. Bishop Austin was consecrated in Westminster Abbey in 1842, before he was thirty-five years of age; and it is recorded that when he kissed hands on his appointment, the Queen declared that he was the youngest and handsomest bishop in her dominions. He was, indeed, a splendid man, standing six feet two inches in his stockings, with broad shoulders, surmounted by a noble head. Without being strictly handsome, he had a fine face, with an amiable expression and a bright smile. Devoted to all manly exercises, a practised swimmer and a fine oar, the bishop was a model for a colonial prelate. For fifty years he ruled over the Church in Guiana with firmness, tact, and good temper. He had no extreme opinions,

tolerated all varieties of ritual amongst his clergy, so long as he found them earnest, hard-working men. He himself set an example to his people. Several months in every year were spent in most arduous and wearisome journeys up the vast rivers and forests of the interior. Nothing daunted him. Camping out night after night in the damp bush, shooting dangerous rapids, spending interminable hours with his long legs cramped up in Indian canoes, were mere pastimes to him. He was always in robust health, in excellent spirits, loving his work, loved and respected by all men.

He seldom left his diocese; but he attended two Pan-Anglican Synods in England, where he was treated with marked respect by the archbishops and bishops of the Anglican Church. When the West Indies and Guiana were made, in 1888, into a Provincial Synod, he was chosen as their Primate; and when he visited England, in 1888, at his second Pan-Anglican Synod, the University of Cambridge honoured him and themselves by creating him an LL.D. of the University, on which occasion the Public Orator described him as the "Nestor of the English Church." A year later the Queen appointed him to be Prelate of the most distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George. In August, 1892, we celebrated in the colony the bishop's jubilee. The new cathedral was approaching its completion, and the venerable prelate, who was then in failing health, was anxious to open it before he obtained the rest which he had so nobly earned.

It was a most touching sight when, the first part of the service being over, the venerable bishop was seen entering the western door of the cathedral, in full canonicals, with the collar of his order round his neck, and leaning on his son, the Rev. W. G. G. Austin, and his chaplain, the Rev. Walter Heard, who supported his arms as he came slowly up the aisle. When the vast congregation saw their venerable father in God, sobs burst forth on all sides, tears were rolling down the cheeks of most of the people, and many of the black women wept aloud.

Slowly, and with great difficulty, the bishop reached his episcopal chair, placed on a dais in the middle of the church, his medical attendant taking his place behind, while the chaplain held the pastoral staff by his side, and then the Rev. W. G. Austin read his father's sermon, which he was unable to deliver himself—a most touching address. "Little children, love one another," was the text; and as the loving words which he addressed to us were being read, it seemed to us all as if we were indeed listening to the words of the disciple whom Jesus loved, and that the venerable figure before us was indeed one of the Apostles of old come again in the flesh. The short sermon was ended, and then the bishop, assisted out of his chair and supported on either side as before, grasped his pastoral staff in one hand, and raising the other into the air, blessed us all. In trembling tones, but using up the last forces of nature left to him, quite audible through

the great building, he poured forth the solemn words of the Liturgy; and if ever blessing can come to men from mortal lips, it came upon us all that day. As he ended there was a dead stillness, broken only by the stifled sobs of the congregation, which could not be stifled when their venerable father in God was slowly removed from them. It was his last effort—such an effort as only a man of his invincible courage could have made. After considerable suffering, borne with his usual cheerfulness, he died on the 9th of November, 1892, aged 85.

I was told by a well-known M.F.H. in Herefordshire that it was impossible for any white man to live for a year in British Guiana; and he seemed to consider me a proper liar when I said that I had lived there on and off for twenty-five years.

But, like many other places, the colony has been more sinned against than sinning; and life there is pleasant enough, and not unhealthy, if proper precautions are taken. It is a curious fact that fair-complexioned men, especially those whose hair is of a—well, auburn hue, run less risks in hot malarial climates than those of dark complexion; possibly because the latter are more bilious in temperament. Although flat and ugly on the coast-line, the country is full of variety; and the great diversity of people, differentiating so largely both in race, colour, and dress, adds considerably to the picturesque effect of the landscape and to the interest of our surroundings.

The great curse of all tropical countries to civil servants and soldiers is the necessary separation between husbands and wives, parents and children. Men naturally wish that their offspring should enjoy the same advantages as themselves, so public schools and colleges in the old country absorb their children; and as it is thought desirable that the youngsters should have a home to go to during their holidays, their mother is established at home, while the bread-winner is left alone in the tropics. This separation has a bad effect; parents and children become strangers to each other, wives and husbands form separate friendships and acquaintances, and diverse tastes and occupations, and the effects are sometimes disastrous.

Has it ever struck my readers how many cases in the Divorce Court arise from these separations? In my own case, I never set eyes on one of my boys for nine years, and on another for five, and from my wife I was separated at one time for more than three and a half years. Of course, in Demerara it is possible for girls to be fairly educated, and also boys, up to seventeen years of age, when, if they intend to enter one of the learned professions, they must go to Europe to obtain the necessary instructions and pass the required examinations.

On the whole, although glad to return to my native country, I had many regrets in leaving Demerara; the more so as I left the colony when it was under a cloud. No more energetic planters and merchants are to be found in the whole world

than in British Guiana. By immense and continued expenditure in labour-saving machinery, and by the strictest economy, the cost of making a ton of crystallized sugar has been reduced in my time from $100 to about $48; but the prices have fallen more rapidly, and the same crystals which were selling in 1872 at 37*s.* 6*d.* a hundredweight now only realize 14*s.* 6*d.* to 15*s.* There is only one remedy which can be of any use, *i.e.* a small duty levied in England upon all the bounty-fed beet sugar which pours into these islands from the continent. This has been recommended by General Sir H. Norman, G.C.B., who was chairman of the late Commission of Inquiry in the West Indies; but it is very doubtful whether any English statesman will be able to persuade Parliament to sanction such an impost.

It is not for me to enter into any political questions, but I must make my protest against the statements promulgated by some Radical politicians with regard to the East Indian immigrant in British Guiana and Trinidad. There can be no doubt that the change of scene is as much a benefit to the Indian himself as to the planter for whom he works.

The Indian peasant in his native village, overburdened with debt, his small dwelling seized by a usurious money-lender in payment of a loan originally small, but swollen by compound interest to ten times its original value, his cattle brought to the hammer, and his household goods threatened with dispersal, the dishonour of his wife and

daughters being exacted as the last thing he has to offer to his exorbitant creditor, affords, indeed, a miserable spectacle to our view. Disheartened, hopeless, ready to murder the money-lender, he hears, as he smokes his hubble-bubble under the village tree in the cool of the evening, of a land in the far west, where labourers are scarce, so that the working man can earn silver in plenty, and become rich and independent; perhaps he meets one of his acquaintances, whom he has lost sight of for many years, but who has now returned with two or three thousand rupees, which he has earned in that same distant land; so our poor peasant packs up in a bundle his few remaining possessions, takes his wife and children to the nearest emigration depôt, and offers himself as a passenger for one of our West Indian colonies. After an examination by a native doctor, he is taken before a magistrate, when the terms of his contract of service are explained to him, after which he is forwarded to the head depôt at Calcutta. Here he is placed in comfortable quarters and well fed till the next ship is ready to sail; and at last finds himself, with his wife and children, afloat on the great ocean, in the ship which is to bear them to their new home.

After his first troubles are over he feels quite at home on board. He is surrounded by four or five hundred men and women of the same caste as himself; some from his own village, many from his neighbourhood. The ship is clean, airy, and comfortable. An experienced doctor examines the

whole living freight day by day. The provisions are good and wholesome, and cooked by men of his own or a higher caste. Strict discipline is maintained on board, but singing, dancing, and smoking are allowed at certain hours. So the weary days slip away until the good ship drops her anchor in the muddy waters of the Demerara River.

Our peasant, his wife and children are landed at the immigration depôt, registered on the books, and the whole family allotted to some plantation, to which they are conveyed as soon as possible.

What is the position of the Bengal immigrant when he arrives at his new quarters? In the first place, he is not amongst strangers; he finds himself surrounded by hundreds of his own countrymen; he hears his own familiar tongue spoken all round him. Maybe he is suddenly welcomed by some old acquaintance whom he has not seen for years, and the first night is spent in anxious questions and reassuring answers as to the state of relations and friends in their distant home. Novelties there are but few. The new arrivals are mustered every morning to receive their rations—rice, ghee, dholl forming their staple food, as in Bengal. A clean dry room is given to each family, in which they unpack the few treasures brought over the sea—the shining brass lotah, the brown hubble-bubble, with its well-polished coco-nut bowl, and their small bundle of clothes.

The new-comers are all put to light work, and are provided with a hoe, fork, and cutlass. The

females are sent out, under a female driver, to weed the young canes, or, if the mills are working, to carry megass from the logies to the furnaces. The immigrants are only required to work seven hours in the fields in each day, the remainder of the twenty-four being at their own disposal. To sum up the position of the Indian peasant in his new home in British Guiana—he has a house, free of rent; medical attendance and medicine gratis for himself and family when sick; food cheap—rice, the staff of his life, can be purchased by the bag at three cents a pound; a moderate amount of work, for which he is paid fair wages at the current rates; and the small amount of fuel required to cook his food he is allowed to cut at the back of the estate. There is no cold season, so clothes are only worn as ornaments. A loin-cloth is generally the only dress of the working coolie. As to wages, he can easily earn from six to eight shillings a week, and, with his wife five shillings, and his children two shillings each—say fifteen shillings a week, one week with another—out of this sum he can easily save five shillings a week, which he can deposit in the Government Savings Bank, and on which he receives 3 per cent. interest; so that when he has finished his five years under indenture, he should be worth more than $200.

Of course, it is not pretended that this is the case except in the minority of instances, but that is not the fault of the system, but of the men themselves. Rum is cheap, and the Hindoos and

Madrasees, who in their own country are the soberest of men, become in too many instances infected with the love of strong drink, and may be seen on Saturday nights and Sundays reeling about and yelling in drunken fury, or lying like logs by the roadside in a drunken stupor. But, sad as it may be to see the amount of drunkenness amongst the immigrants, it is at least a proof that they have an excess of money beyond their actual wants to enable them to indulge in such debaucheries, as rum costs two shillings and beer one shilling a quart bottle.

In his own country, the Indian peasant is sober of necessity, and as to food, he only enjoys one meal a day, and his drink is the nearest puddle. If an immigrant be strong, sober, and industrious, there is no limit to the prosperity to which he may attain.

Many coolies in Demerara and Trinidad, who landed with nothing but the cloth about their loins, are now wealthy men, with hundreds of dollars in the savings banks, herds of cattle, provision and rum shops, the stock of which are worth from $500 to $2000. On festal days the wives and daughters of these whilom labourers appear laden with gold and silver jewelry; they drive through Georgetown and Port of Spain in cabs, they keep livery stables, and even own race-horses.

Of course, East Indians are not different from other immigrants. Sober and industrious men prosper in a wonderful way; lazy, intemperate

ones fall into the usual dissolute habits of their class, and never do any good. But there is nothing repressive in the colony; every man or woman who goes there has an equal chance of improvement, unless disabled by sickness, or physically incapable of exertion. That the climate is well suited to East Indians is shown by the fine healthy appearance of the creole coolies; the men are stronger and the women fairer than their parents from India. In fact, a fine race of people is springing up in the country, the offspring of the immigrants, who may, it is hoped, in time form the principal resident population, and put an end to the present expensive system of immigration.

It may be said that this is all written *en coleur de rose*, that if any system were perfect, and if men were angels, that the state of the immigrant might be perfection; but that the system in effect breaks down; that the planters are tyrannical and unjust; the magistrates corrupt and one-sided; the Government supine and indifferent; so that, however excellent the safeguards of the coolie may appear on paper, it is just the opposite in practice. It is true that in some few particulars a change for the better might be made in the immigration system, but it is altogether false to assert that the present laws on the subject are not upheld with the strictest integrity. The naked coolie has as fair a hearing and as strict justice meted out to him in magistrates' courts in the colony as is

shown to any English subject in any court in England. The managers of estates are almost uniformly kind to their people; and if they were not so, they are under such strict Government control, and the penalty for the ill-treatment of immigrants so tremendous, that few have the chance or the desire of making themselves liable to them. And let no one suppose the coolie is a patient sufferer, bearing ill-treatment without a murmur. He is quite conscious of his own importance. Let a cent of his wages be stopped, or a hair of his head touched, he never rests until he has obtained redress.

The houses of the magistrates and immigration agents are constantly besieged by coolies with petty complaints, which have to be investigated, and which, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, are purely imaginary, or grossly exaggerated. With Oriental imagery and metaphor, the coolie magnifies his wrongs until they seem almost unbearable by any one man, but which, when touched by the spear of truthful investigation, melt away like the baseless fabric of a dream. It may with truth be asserted that, for many years past, no coolie immigrant has sustained any substantial injury from one of the governing class without receiving ample redress. He receives much worse treatment from his fellow-countrymen; in fact, the quarrels between coolies, male and female, furnish much of the work for the courts of justice. The Hindoo or Mussulman from Bengal or Oude is the most litigious of men, and will often spend

$50 or $100 in the Law Courts trying to avenge himself on an adversary who has offended him.

We have now seen the Indian peasant in his old and in his adopted home. Let us compare the two positions. On the one hand, misery and poverty, debt and starvation; on the other, comfort, food, and moderate labour, leading to independence and even wealth. Let any one compare the immigrant when he first lands in Demerara with the same man a year or two afterwards. At first he is a poor cringing creature, bowing to the earth before every white man he meets; apologetic for his very existence. You meet the same man in two years' time, strong, clean, erect, passing with an indifferent stare, or if he knows and respects you, with a hearty "Salaam, Sahib," and a wave of his hand towards his turban. What is the cause of this change? Because the man has found out that he is some one; that he has a value and position of his own; that in the eyes of the law, no one is better than he; because he is free from debt, and making money. All these things combine to make him hold up his head and give a spring to his step. But I will go further than this, and say that the condition of the immigrant can be compared favourably with the position of the agricultural labourer in the southern counties of England.

No better object-lesson as to the improved condition of the Indian peasant in his West-Indian home could have been furnished to a spectator than what I myself saw in Essequibo,

some years ago, when famine was raging in Madras. Standing amongst a group of immigrants, I was showing them those sad pictures which appeared in the English illustrated papers from photographs of the famine-stricken wretches in India. Cries of wonder and horror burst from the people on all sides, tears stood in their eyes as they pointed to the representations of the miserable skeletons which were a living people; and it was with pride and pleasure that my eyes wandered over the groups of robust, active forms around me, well-nourished, strong, and elegant, and to the brown plump bodies of the naked Indian children crawling about our feet in all the abandonment of unclothed childhood.

The contrast of the two scenes, the one on paper, the other in reality, required no commentator to impress its teaching on the spectator. It cannot be denied that miserable objects are to be seen at times in the public streets of the colony —Indian beggars, foul with loathsome sores, and reduced to skeletons; but these are, nine times out of ten, the victims of their own vices or sloth, who have reduced themselves to such a condition in spite of all that the Government and the public can do to prevent them, and who prefer to live upon the misplaced charity or sickening disgust of kindly people, rather than earn an honest livelihood by any physical exertion.

In all countries and races there is a class of malingerers. Doctors have told me that in the estates' hospitals they have been compelled to tie

up their patients' hands to prevent them tearing the poultices from their ulcers, so as to prolong their detention in the idleness and comfort of the hospital. Similarly in the Georgetown Gaol some of the prisoners would eat the sand-box seeds which fell into the gaol yard, so as to cause dysentery, which would necessitate their confinement in the hospital, and consequent cessation of work.

British Guiana ought to be a paradise for the poor inhabitants. No fires are required except for cooking; clothes are only used for decency or ornament. Any shanty which will turn the rain is a sufficient dwelling; walls are a superfluity, as they only keep out the cooling sea-breeze. The earth, under the most perfunctory cultivation, produces food in abundance; a bunch of plantains, which will keep a man for a week in food, can be bought for a shilling or a guilder. Wages are high; any able-bodied labourer can earn two shillings a-day, whilst mechanics and carpenters obtain from eighty-eight cents to a dollar. There are thousands of acres of virgin soil waiting for cultivation, which can be bought at a dollar an acre, so that in a few years of steady labour and thrift any of the peasantry can become landed proprietors.

It is gratifying to find that the peasantry of the colony are advancing in knowledge, thrift, and self-respect. The villagers now elect their own council, and, under the fostering care of the Central Board of Health, are gradually developing

into well-governed communities. The number of depositors in the Savings Bank shows a steady increase; a greater interest in politics, both colonial and village, is being excited; there is a growing desire to acquire and cultivate the soil; and there seems some hope that we may realize one of the great wants of the colony, viz. a self-supporting agricultural peasantry.

The gold industry has not so far realized the expectations of the colonists. It is true that the exports of gold have risen from 250 ounces in 1884 to about 127,000 ounces in 1897, but the increase during the last three years has not been large, and the results of quartz-crushing at the Kanaimapo and Barima mines have not been of such a nature as to attract the European capitalist. That gold exists in paying quantities over a large area of the colony no one can doubt, but it is a country where prospecting is carried out with great difficulty owing to the dense forests with which it is covered, so it is possible the richest deposits have so far evaded the quest of the miner.

Diamonds have been discovered accidentally whilst searching for gold, and there is no reason why large deposits of these precious stones should not be found, seeing that Brazil was of old renowned for its diamonds, and Guiana resembles that neighbouring country in geological formation.

Given fair treatment to the sugar planter with regard to bounty-fed sugar, abandonment by the Indian Government of the back passage to India for every East Indian immigrant, and a reasonable

influx of European capital to assist in the development of the gold-fields, then British Guiana will develop with leaps and bounds, and become, as it ought to be, one of the brightest jewels in the Imperial Crown of Britain.

APPENDIX A

The names of the different sugar estates in British Guiana indicate clearly the various nationalities which have successively owned the soil. The Dutch, French, and English succeeded each other in possession. In addition to this, during and after the negro insurrection in Hayti, a large number of French planters with their families emigrated to British Guiana.

The Dutch occupation has left the broadest mark on the colony. Not only do the majority of the estates possess Dutch names, but so do objects in common use, and the common law of the colony is still Roman-Dutch. "Goedverwagting," "Zorg," "Uitvlugt," "Stanvastigheid," "Met-en-meerzorg," "Hoff-van-aurich," "Vryheids Lust," and hundreds of other Dutch names of estates still survive.

The French planters are recalled by "La Belle Alliance," "Mon Repos," "Le Desir," "Le Repentir," "Le Resouvenir," "Mon Bijon," "Vive la force," and many others. Whilst John Bull has given characteristic titles to his properties—"Diamond," "Golden Grove," "Hope," "Experiment," "Fear not," "Beehive," "Reliance," "Providence," etc. "Nabaclis" must have been so called by an Irishman.

APPENDIX B

Glossary of Creole Words.

In a country originally occupied by Indian tribes speaking several distinct tongues, and conquered by Spaniards, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, and Englishmen in turn, it is only reasonable to expect a survival of many strange words, which by degrees will become obsolete and unknown. An immigrant population of Hindoos and Congoes have added its quota to this polyglot multitude; so that the current language of British Guiana is a curious mixture of many tongues. By printing the following list of words in common use in the colony, I do not mean to assert that they are all peculiar to it, and not used elsewhere; some of them are well known in the West Indian Islands.

A.

Able, strong; handsome.
Abouya, peccary.
Accourie, a kind of guinea-pig.
Adourie, a kind of guinea-pig.
Ant-bear, great ant-eater.
Antiman, a sodomite.
Ashus, splendid; fine.
Assaye, drink made from manicole palm.
Atturibanna, traveller's tree.

B.

Baby, very large flask of hollands.
Ballahòo, small punt.
Banjo-man, a kind of hassar.
Barìdi, a small hawk.
Batteau, a round-bottomed boat.
Battel, round wooden dish used by gold-seekers.
Bawakàtta, large armadillo.
Bee-bird, humming-bird.
Bell-bird, campanèro.

Beltièrie, drink made from purple yams.
Benab, hut built of poles, with a palm-thatched roof.
Benabòo, small benab.
Bête rouge, red grass-ticks.
Bill-bird, toucan.
Bitt, fourpenny-piece.
Boss, bass, master.
Bottlebrush, a splendid climber, with scarlet flowers like brushes.
Boviander, cross between a Dutchman and a native Indian.
Brake mout, very hard biscuit.
Brigade, albert watch-chain.
Brinkel, a kind of fish.
Buck, aboriginal Indian.
Buckeen, female aboriginal Indian.
Buck-pot, Indian earthenware pot.
Buckra, chief: generally applied to white men.
Buckramànna, a very hot kind of red pepper.
Buckshell, Indian canoe.
Buck-shot, seeds of a caladium.
Bulls, big flat cakes of flour and pork.
Bundoùri, species of crab.
Bush-cow, tapir.
Bushmaster, venomous snake.
Bushropes, llianes.
Busy-busy, a kind of reed.
Butter-fish, a kind of smelt.

C.

Caddy, mixed shell and sand.
Calalôo, a kind of spinach.
Càma, tapir.
Camahead pine, a large wild pine-apple.
Camòodie, boa-constrictor.
Carcòtie, a sort of fibre.
Càrra-càrra, a beautiful scarlet climber.
Carrion crow bush, wild senna.
Cartaback, a river fish.
Casìrie, drink made from sweet potatoes.
Casserèep, boiled juice of bitter cassana.
Caveàched (fish), cold fish, with pepper, vinegar, and onion.
Cayman, large alligator.
Chokabàwt, miners' mess: dumplings, salt pork, and rice.
Chuck, blow; push.
Cob, cross between mulatto and black.
Coffin-trimmer, a bush-owl.
Colony doctors, vampire bats.
Comb-fish, saw-fish.
Compass, a pint.
Conquintay, plantain meal.
Coolie, East Indian immigrant.
Coonacòoshie, bushmaster.
Corial, Indian canoe.
Corn coo-coo, boiled sweet maize.
Crab-dog, a kind of fox.
Creek, small river; brook.
Creole, born in the Colony.
Crosby, immigration agent.
Cuffum, tarpon: large fish like a herring.
Cuia, a kind of trogon.
Cuiràsse, a skin-fish.
Curri-curri, scarlet ibis.
Cuttee-cuttee, vegetable soup.

D.

Dallibànna, palm, used for roofing.
Dam, dyke.
Dàrree, a kind of fish.
Dinkee, female's petticoat.
Double-lay, strippings of soil, before you come to pay-dirt.

Drògher, a schooner.
Drògheree, small schooner.
Drògherу, drying ground for coffee.
Duraquarra, a bird like a partridge.

E.

Eddoes, kind of yam.
Eetàboo, water-way, forming a short cut through bush.
Ematubboh, a portage round a rapid.
Expression, bad abusive word: "He use an expression, Sah."

F.

Fat pork, a kind of plum.
Fire, strike: "He fire a kick at me."
Foo-foo, boiled plantains, pounded.
Foot, used for the whole leg.
Four eyes, a small fish found in brackish water.
Four-foot, trench of that width.

G.

Gallery, verandah to a house.
Gallinipper, large mosquito.
Gaulding, white ibis.
Gilbacker, a large skin-fish.
Gill, a penny.
Gill bread, a small loaf of bread.
Grenadilla, fruit of large passion flower.
Groo-groo worm, caterpillar out of groo-groo palm, eaten as a delicacy.
Guana, iguana: large edible lizard.
Guffy, a gullible person.
Guilder, local coin, value 1*s.* 4*d.*

H.

Hackia-stick, stick made of hackia; any long hard stick.
Half-foot man, man with one leg.
Half-hand man, man with one arm.
Hand, used for the whole arm.
Hangnest, golden oriole.
Hardback, black beetle.
Hàssa, fish covered with armour.
Hautow, blue-headed mot-mot.
Hèerie, large white crane.
Hiàree, plant used by Indian to poison fish.
Honòonoo, large bumble-bee.
Hook, point of a river.
Hôwrie, fresh-water fish.

I.

Iturìtie, used in making baskets.

J.

Jackass, rice-bag hammock.
Jew, or June fish, a large sea-fish.
Jiggers, sand-fleas (*Pulex penetrans*).
Joe, a gold coin, value $7.33.
Johnny cake, flour, water, and salt baked.
Johnny crow, turkey buzzard.
Juke, poke: "He juke me wi' he stick."
Jumbi, ghost.
Jumbi fowl, sensa, or Dominique.

Jumbi ochro, bush-mallow.
fowl.
Jumper, short jacket.

K.

Kapòorie (Arawak), abandoned field.
Karôuni, wild boar.
Keenah, dislike (to some person).
Kètting, a company canal.
Kibbahêe, coati.
King-road, highway.
Kinkajòu, a sort of polecat.
Kìskadi, bird ; shrike.
Knife-grinder, cicada.
Kockàhbay, a kind of leprosy.
Koker, a sluice.
Krùmi, a kind of cuffum.
Kush-kush, slush of megass in cane-piece.
Kyderkòoree, smallarmadillo.

L.

Labàrria, poisonous snake.
Labba, the hollow-cheeked paca.
Lap, Indian apron.
Laura, parrot (Sp. *Lora*).
Lazy-bird, cuckoo.
Logie, shed.
Long-tom, negro dance.
Low-low, large fresh-water fish.

M.

Maam, wild bird, rail.
Mahòuka, sort of bustard, with spurs on wings.
Maiwàrree, a fresh-water fish.
Mammee apple, large brown round fruit.
Mamòorie, strong fibre used for rope.
Mànatee, sea-cow ; dugong.
Mandram, an appetiser, made of chopped cucumber and fresh pepper.
Mangroo, mangoe.
Mannish, saucy ; impudent.
Manrè, basket for winnowing coffee.
Marabùnta, wasp.
Maroudie, wild turkey.
Mascuitte, uncured sugar.
Mash, crush : "She mash me fut."
Maswah, climbing palm.
Matapìe, cassava strainer.
Maullies, bobs of hair on back of woman's head.
Mawer boundah, scarlet bottle-brush : a climbing plant.
Medallion, locket or trinket on watch-chain.
Megàss, sugar-cane refuse.
Middle walk, main road of an estate.
Mìngie mamma, dancing mermaid.
Mòcco-mòcco, wild arum.
Monkey jumping, hauling punts up stream by fastening ropes to trees.
Monkey-pots, seed capsules of a forest tree.
Monkey rope, margravia : a beautiful climbing plant.
Monkey syrup, a small green fruit.
Mortar-stick, club used for pounding foo-foo.
Mosquito worm, large parasitic grub.
Mucùroo, a kind of basket.
Mudhead, a native of British Guiana.
Mustèe, cross between quadroon and black.

Mynàp (Carib), abandoned field.
Mypòurie, tapir.

N.

Negro cop, large crane, with a black head.
Nigger-man rice, rice boiled with pork, beef, fish, and pepper.
Numb fish, electric eel.
Nyam, to eat: "Dog no nyam dog."

O.

Obeah, witchcraft.
Old witch, black cattle bird.
Ouistiti, squirrel-monkey.
Outlawded, desperate; reckless.

P.

Paal, boundary stake.
Pàcoo, a fresh-water fish.
Parasite, orchid; epiphyte.
Pashumah, scraggy.
Patwàllah, palm ribs used to make pawee.
Pàwee, stop-off to catch fish.
Peerai, fresh-water shark.
Pegall, Indian basket.
Pegàss, peat.
Pepper-pot, stewed meat flavoured with cassareep and fresh peppers.
Piccaninny, pickney, children.
Pimpler, thorn.
Pimpler haag, hedgehog; porcupine.
Pinder bràfoo, soup, thickened with pinders.
Pinder, ground-nut.
Pittee, a strong kind of fibre.
Piwarrie, intoxicating drink made by Indians from cassava; a spree.
Plantain walk, fields of plantains.
Plantains, vegetable bananas.
Pond-fly, dragon-fly.
Poodey baum, cherry tree.
Portmantel, carpet-bag; portmanteau.
Powis, curassow.
Putta-putta, soft mud.

Q.

Quaak, a sea-coast bird that utters that sound.
Quacca-bukker, company canal.
Quackoo, small marabunta.
Quadrille-bird, a wild bird that pipes the opening bars of the old quadrilles.
Quaick, a kind of basket.
Question, immoral solicitation.
Queyo, a bead apron worn by Indian women.
Qu-qu, inspection: to q-q a sugar estate.

R.

Rain-bird, a bird that heralds the rainy season.
Red howler, baboon (*mycetes*).

S.

Sackawìnki, small spectacled monkey.
Sàcki, a small blue, or grey bird (tanager).
Salampenter, large lizard.
Sand-fly, a small stinging insect.

Sàngaree, iced negus.
Sapadìlla, fruit; nazeberry.
Satin, drink composed of gin, seltzer, sugar, and ice.
Savannah, prairie.
Savez, knowledge.
Scotchman, common wild flower; a large prawn.
Sea-cow, manatee; dugong.
Seepage, water oozing from a swamp.
Shrìmmies, shrimps.
Side-lines, the dams which enclose an estate on each side.
Silverballi, a native wood.
Simitòo, fruit of wild passion flower.
Smouse (to), to raise the top of a dam to keep out water.
Snake-bird, diver.
Snake-fish, eel.
Soul-case, man's body.
Spurwing, bird (*Parra jassana*).
Squash, vegetable-marrow.
Stelling, wharf.
Stìngaree, sting ray.
Stink-bird, hoatzin; canjè pheasant.
Stiver, small coin; penny.
Stop-off, a dam across water-way.
Sunfish, fresh-water fish, like a trout.
Swizzle, cocktail.

T.

Tàcooba, heart of tree; snag.
Tànnia, kind of yam.
Tetter, skin disease.
Tiger, jaguar; any kind of felidoe.
Tiger-bird, bittern.
Tiger-fish, a handsome striped pike-like fish.
Too-ròo drink, drink made from too-roo palm.
Trench, canal.
Tròolie, broad-leaved palm, used for thatching.

W.

Wàbri, a fresh-water fish like a small bream.
Waggon, a four-wheeled buggy.
Wahdàroh, wild plantain.
Wahòurie, small perai.
Wàllaba, wood used for shingles.
Wallabàba, purple cotinga.
Warracàbra, trumpet-bird.
Warràmbi, cassava sifter.
Water-dog, otter.
Water-haas, capỳbara.
Water-lemons, fruit of passion-flower.
Water-mamma, mermaid; syren.
Who are you? goat-sucker.
Wicìssi, wild duck; teal.
Wirrebiscère, small antelope.
Wòngalah, a kind of soup.
Wood-skin, Indian bark canoe.
Worry-worry, midges.
Wouràli, Indian poison for arrows.
Wow-wow, a kind of trogon.

Y.

Yam nàcktie, night-prowling monkey.
Yarrow, a trout-like fish.
Yarrow manny, a plant, seeds deadly poison.
Yèssi, armadillo.
Yeyeturn, squinting eye; dizziness.
Yrwarry, opossum rat.

APPENDIX C

THE following most amusing case between two Africans occurred in Mr. Turk's court, and was most inimitably reported by Mr. McTurk. Of course the spelling is conjectural and phonetic :—

William Henry summoned Thomas Hercules to answer an alleged charge of theft.

Complainant asserted that defendant had stolen his duck, value five shillings.

While the complaint was being read, defendant listened without interruption until the alleged value of the duck, five shillings, was stated, when he made the remark, "Duck price raise fo' true!" On being called upon to plead to the charge, he replied, "Wa da? Da tough, tough, someting fo' five shillin'; man no ha conscience. Bin sevin bit an' a half, fine someting; but whole five shillin'—— Guilty? No, sah, me isn't guilty. Hello!"

The complainant was then sworn, and in answer to the magistrate stated that he lived at Water Lot, in the county of Essequibo. The defendant interrupted, said this statement was a lie, "cause he lib a' one trash house, inside cow-pasture." Proceeding, complainant stated that on a certain day he "bin hab one duck-drake, and de duck-drake always does walk in de trench wid de duck-hen; dem da catch shrimmies. One big trench bin deh right a we do' mout', me honour, an' we bin lib one side de trench

and Tammas de oddah. Me always does see how Tammas does watch dem duck, hungry fashion." Happening this moment to look at the defendant, complainant wanted to know "da who you a cut you yiye 'pon?" Defendant simply remarked, "You see um!" Complainant, who was becoming excited, continued, saying he "bin see how Tammas does watch dem duck, hungry fashion." Thomas here audibly sucked his teeth, at which complainant became more excited, and hurriedly said, "Look da nagah mout', me honour; watch un good he mout', 'tau jus' like a harrygatah (alligator), a so harrygatah mout' 'tan 'wen dem hungry fo' duck-chicken."

Defendant wanted to know "da who he call nagah" (nigger). The magistrate informed the complainant that he mustn't call the defendant "nagah," nor use any other offensive term in alluding to him. Defendant thanked the magistrate, and, in a sort of stage-whisper, audible throughout the court, remarked, "Tank God me teet' no tan like parch co'n," which reference to the colour of the complainant's teeth, which were very yellow, caused a tittering amongst the spectators.

Proceeding, complainant said that on a certain morning after taking his tea, he "bin miss de duck," and, as "Tammas had lef' he house" on the previous day, "we min bin gie me Tammas hois' me duck, cause me does see he bin a watch dem." He then, he said, called a witness, or, to use his own term, a "wickedness," and the two went to where he knew "Tammas bin get in fo' to lib." This was about 10 a.m. On arrival there in company with the "wickedness," "he bin see a saucepan deh, 'pon tap fire a-boil; de saucepan deh right a de do' mout', an' so me put me yiye 'pon 'em. Me see someting a boil deh, and two duck foot deh; de saucepan can't boil um. One time me wan' fo' reman' (demand) de duck. Tammas come out a do', come ax me wa me wan' deh. Me tell um da duck. Tammas loose some nassy cuss 'pon me, an', please me honour, he say——" The magistrate desired the complainant not to report the "cusses," but to go on with his

evidence. This he did reluctantly, at having to omit the repetition of the "cusses," but insisted on saying that the "refenant cuss me warious," and he identified the duck by "a plit on its right han' fingah-toe," where he himself had given the "fingah-'kin a 'plit."

Defendant was asked if he wished to ask the complainant any questions. Turning to complainant, defendant coughed twice, and then desired him, the complainant, to "watch me good." Cross-examination as follows :—

Defendant. "You 'pon you hoat'?"

Complainant. "You no' see me kiss da book?"

Defendant. "You say da duck bin da saucepan. How you know he no fowl-cock?"

Complainant. "You ebba see fowl-cock got fingah-'kin?"

Defendant. "You say bin a ten a'clack. How you know dat da? Wich side you get watch?"

Complainant. "Hum! Ram goat got bea'd, but you ebba see um da shabe bea'd wid razah?"

Defendant. "You say me bin lib clos' you; you no' see me bin got fowl an' duck dem."

Complainant. "A see you bin get two tree pashumah (scraggy) fowl. Da wak you go do wid duck? You sa tief you matty own!"

Defendant. "Watch me, good sah, an' no' come cut your yiye 'pon me. No lie! You do lie, da place you tan up deh!"

Complainant became so indignant at this that he was told to stand down and call his witness.

The first witness for the prosecution being called, stated her name was Mrs. Boson. On being asked her Christian name she said, "Me name Billy Boson, sah, but me title Misis Boson." Having been sworn, she stated, "Bin Friday maanin', sah, an' me bin get up, me washup, an go a do', an' me come back, an' come clean me teet'."

On being asked to confine herself to the time from when she was called by the complainant, she said, "Da da me a tell you, sah. So me come from a do', sah." Here

she was stopped again, and asked if she knew the duck. Replying, she said, "Me, sah, ow me washup, me know de duck-drake sence he bin a chicken"—she knew it—"he fingah-'kin habe a 'plit." In what way was it split. "A go tell you, sah. Mr. Henry bin got plenty fowl, sah, an' he bin got some duck too, an' some time dem duck a lay on dem us want set; and sometimes dem fowl da lay too, an' dem no want set down 'pon de hegg—me washup, dem 'tack is too provokin.' So, me washup, Mr. Henry bin got plenty fowl hegg, an' fowl no want set, an' he no got duck hegg, an' dem duck a train up demself, an' se' down pan piece po' k bone an' one ol' pipe for try hatch dem out, teh de gen'lman 'blige put some fowl hegg gie one o' dem duck let he cast he mind 'pon um. De duck look 'pon dem hegg, me washup, an' he know well dem no duck hegg, but wen pickney can't get mama dem 'blige suck grannie. De duck try best 'pon dem fowl hegg teh dem come hatch out, but when de duck come look 'pon dem chickens, he tummick turn. Win de hatch done, de duck carry dem fowl-chicken a trench, fo' catch shrimmies. De duck get in watah, 'tan up 'trait to shake he wing; one time he put he head a battam watah, an' tun he tail atap. Dem fowl-chicken tan up a trench-side, an' tink dem mama get fit. Da duck a make quack-quack-quack fo' call dem pickney a watah, dem too make a pi-pi-pi an' tan up a dam. Me washup, de duck no know wa' fo' do, so he came out a dam, begin try best 'cratch dutty for' feed dem chicken. One time glass bottel come cut he fingah-'kin, an' so he gat he fingah-'kin 'plit."

Answer. "You ebba see fowl foot got fingah-'kin 'pon em?"

Question. "You 'pon you hoat' now!"

Answer. "Hi! da wa you hax me da fo'? If you yiye no good, you can put on you 'specticle. You no' bin see w'en me kiss de book?"

Question. "You deh 'pon hoat', 'peak the truit. You no lib wid Willyum?"

Answer. "Wa da! Me washup, me got me married

man a house" (indignantly to defendant). "You wait tell you meet a do' he a'l you see see 'tory."

Mary Jacob being sworn in answer to defendant, said, "she bin know William Henry duck-drake, causin de duck-drake does always walk a trench clos' do' mout'. Da duck ha maak? Yes." On being asked to describe the mark, she said, "Mr. Henry duck bin one ha 'd 'eas duck, an' he no does wan' 'tan clos' house fo' feed a de trench, but he does fly go till a ribah. Wen he put he head a battam, so cock his tail atap, a catch shrimmies, he no a see wa trash deh behin' um, so one time Peri come nyam off he two foot. A duck no bin got foot 't all, no moh maken 'tump, sah." Here complainant interrupted by, "Wan' fo' know if a duck no' bin got 'tick fo' waak wid?"

Question. "You no bin help nyam (eat) a duck?"

Answer. "Who da! Naasy ting like da; me no a nyam duck."

Question. "You know wha' dem call lie?"

Answer. "Me washup, you see dah man a call me liah. No friken, me fren', a go make you prufe me. Me sa 'pin nine bit 'pon you mesef."

Thomas Hercules being asked if he had anything to say for himself, replied, "Wha' me got fo' say? You yeary dee 'tory a 'ready, sah. De man mus' be loss money make he wan' come make um up 'pon me. Wa kin a duck da fo' five shillin'? Da me a got money ah bank? Den da ooman come tell you 'bout duck and fowl pickney. Might as well come tell you say jackass da win' hag pickney. Da lie, sah; hole ting a lie. Da 'pite; dem wan' 'pite me, sah. Da Shatan crass (Satan's curse) dem wan' put 'pon me—come call me harrygatah 'pon top." Case was dismissed. Defendant to complainant, "Berry well, a you yiye clean now? Harrygatah moh na duck-drake."

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